

#1580 Bet Your Life

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:00:00] During today's episode, I'm going to be telling you about a show I think you should check out. It's the *Talking Politics and Religion Without Killing Each Other* podcast. So take a moment to hear what I have to say about them in the middle of the show. And listen wherever you get your podcasts.

And now, welcome to this episode of the award-winning *Best of the Left* podcast, in which we shall take a look at the impact of the rise of highly-addictive smartphone sports gambling, the effects of which are being felt beyond the individual gambler's bank account and anxiety levels. Partnerships between gambling companies and colleges, influencers, and even journalistic institutions like ESPN are changing the fundamentals of the sports themselves and how they're understood by fans, all for the worse.

Sources today include *Wendover Productions*, *Why Is This Happening?*, *The Dominique Foxworth Show*, *TYT Sports*, *Cara Nicole*, the *PBS NewsHour*, and *Edge of Sports*, with additional members-only clips from *Philon* [00:01:00] and *Full Story*.

How the Sports Betting Industry Quietly Consumed America - Wendover Productions - Air Date 12-13-22

The beginnings were as inadvertent as they come. Hastily drawn up and jammed into the entirely unrelated Safe Port Act, the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act passed through Congress in September of 2006, then with President Bush's signature, a month later became law. The unremarkable bit of legislation banned gambling companies from taking payments over the internet made in violation of state or federal law.

The old guard of online gambling -- the likes of Full Tilt Poker, Poker Stars, and Absolute Poker -- the new law would prove an existential threat. For a set of upstarts, though, it functioned as the legal foundation of an as-yet untapped market. In trying to close one loophole, the act opened another with this seemingly innocuous exemption: that betting and wagering did not include participation in fantasy sports, which were deemed as games of skill, not chance.

At the time, the distinction made sense. Fantasy sports were fundamentally different from any sort of online gambling. People didn't get rich off fantasy sports, nor did they lose [00:02:00] thousands, tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars in one fell swoop. Fantasy team owners wagered on season-long outcomes with their friends from school or work and poured over stat sheets for bragging rights as much as money. They might have been obsessed, but they were never quite addicted. Then in 2009, a fateful backyard brainstorm at South by Southwest completely altered the trajectory of fantasy sports, and as they would turn out, sports betting.

The company that coalesced under the Austin Sun was called FanDuel, and it was everything that fantasy wasn't. Countering the traditional season-long league, FanDuel offered daily fantasy. Rather than just playing with your buddies, the service provided tournaments and cash games to compete against countless others. Whereas traditional fantasy leagues only saw minimal financial exchanges in league buy-ins and annual draft guides, FanDuel moved to major money. Just one good day they advertised could net a couple thousand dollars. And thanks to the Unlawful Gambling Enforcement Act of 2006, it was online [00:03:00] and in your pocket. What had been slow moving and cumbersome was now fast and convenient. Just play from your phone, win, and cash out that very same day.

Young people followed and so too did money. FanDuel's first rounds of funding topped \$1 million, then \$4 million. Then by 2013, \$11 million. As investment climbed, so too did winnings. That same year, the platform crowned its first million-dollar prize winner during its December Fantasy Football championship and dished out more than \$150 million in prize money overall. The following year, FanDuel partnered with the NBA, while its rising competitor, DraftKings, nabbed the MLB and NHL. Suddenly, companies that didn't exist just years prior were outspending the entire beer industry, running ads every 90 seconds on national TV. With palm-of-your-hand convenience, cheap buy-ins, mouthwatering prize potential, and unavoidable promotional offers, daily fantasy services had maximized the potential of fantasy sports. Sports fans played, sports leagues and media [00:04:00] invested, while critics and academics began asking exactly to what extent this sped up further gamified version of fantasy sports actually differed from sports betting. Yet, rather than regulators intervening, legislators, league leaders, team owners, and daily fantasy consumers alike began to rethink just how bad sports betting really was. Banned by Congress in every state except Nevada, and opposed by all major leagues, sports betting had long been perceived as the antithesis of fair sports. This wasn't only the position held by league commissioners either, as 56% of Americans polled in 1993 disapproved of its legalization. Through the 2000s, after point-shaving scandals rocked college basketball, then insider betting in

the NBA came to light, betting remained a dark, shady sports underworld in the view of most, and to league leaders, a direct threat. Even through 2012, NFL's Roger Goodell, MLB's Bud Selig, NHL's Gary Bettman, and NCAA's Mark Emmert, each came out against the idea of overturning the federal ban.

[00:05:00] Or at least that's what they said outwardly.

As teams and leagues entered partnerships with gambling-adjacent fantasy platforms, internal conversations slowly shifted from sports betting as a scourge to sports betting as a potential opportunity. Daily fantasy drove more fan engagement, and so too with sports betting. At the same time, sports fans were voting with their wallets as the American Gaming Association estimated that Americans were spending about \$150 billion on wagers annually, with only a small fraction actually going through legal means in Nevada.

Then finally, the head of the NBA came out and said it: If Americans were spending billions on sports bets, American newspapers and media were publishing betting lines, and other countries were finding success in regulating nationwide gambling, then why not just legalize it?

By and large, the public followed the logic, as 2017 polling showed that 55% of Americans had now come to favor the idea of legalized regulated gambling, while only 33% oppose it.

[00:06:00] Polling, though, doesn't overturn federal bans. But the timing was perfect. While daily fantasy shots skyward, and American opinion came around, the legality of the federal ban was coming under question. New Jersey's effort to legalize sports betting to prop up a faltering Atlantic City had climbed all the way to the Supreme Court. And in 2018, a surprise ruling opened the floodgates as Justice Alito delivered at the seven-to-two opinion, acknowledging that while sports gambling is fraught with controversy, it ultimately wasn't the federal government's constitutional right to ban it; rather, that it was the choice of each individual state.

The race was on. Eight states legalized sports betting in 2018. 10 more joined in 2019. Sports books opened in state and tribal casinos. Sports venues added betting kiosks, while DraftKings and FanDuel, the darlings of daily fantasy, opened up brick and mortar lounges across the US and launched mobile online betting in states that allowed it.

But this race to legalize wasn't between states. This was a time trial to see which [00:07:00] gambling industry representatives could secure legalization as quickly as possible in the friendliest terms possible. The likes of FanDuel and

DraftKings, who had previously spent millions ensuring that state legislators saw daily fantasy as a game of skill and not of luck, the strategy was already established, and the team already assembled. From Trenton to Tallahassee to Topeka, lobbyists bought lawmakers gifts and presented the plot points of a new path over expensive glasses of wine. Legalized sports betting, they pitched, would bring tax revenue by the millions, and besides, they argued, people were betting illegally anyway. Why not bring it above board, bring in revenue and create a win-win? Or what about a win-win-win? they'd ask. Where regulations and taxes are slightly less burdensome, so more sports books are incentivized to enter the market, so more users have more outlets to bet, so more volume brings the state more tax revenue.

The pressure was immense, as the deep pockets of the world's most recognizable casinos spared no expense in helping state legislators see the issue from their point of view.

The Explosion of Online Sports Betting with Eric Lipton - Why Is This Happening? - Air Date 5-9-23

CHRIS HAYES - HOST, WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?: There's a history here, right? Maybe [00:08:00] it's worth talking about this for a while. I mean, anyone who's seen *Eight Men Out*, which is about the Chicago White Sox, the Black Sox scandal of the early 20th century, in which players on the team were betting against themselves, they were throwing games, right? That there's always been this concern if you allow a lot of sports gambling, and if you legalize it and if it's accessible, that the actual competitors and participants themselves will get pulled into it. And of course, to the extent, if they end up owing a ton of money to a bookie, then the bookie says to him, here's how you can pay me back: make sure you don't score 20 points tomorrow night. And then someone can bet the under on their individual performance and hit it big. Am I right that that's the thing that has hung over this entire conversation for a century?

ERIC LIPTON: Yeah, no question. It was sort of the Black Plague, especially for baseball with the kind of Pete Rose and the fact that Pete Rose had been a coach at the same time that he was betting on his own in games. And it was a practice that, in fact, that professional sports league cited in their lawsuit as at the same [00:09:00] time as they were suing New Jersey, saying that this would compromise the integrity of the game. Behind the scenes after the oral arguments, when it became clear that the court was likely gonna side with New

Jersey, they were already negotiating with DraftKings and FanDuel lobbyists to begin an alliance to legalize state by state. So they saw where this was headed. But yes, this was why baseball in particular was so adamantly opposed to embracing legalized betting, was that they saw that it was gonna undermine the integrity of the game. But they changed their tune just before the Supreme Court ruled.

CHRIS HAYES - HOST, WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?: I have to say that, if you're talking about Kevin Durant, Devin Booker, or Giannis Antetokounmpo, some huge NBA star, or even anyone in the NBA, I don't think it's that likely that these athletes are gonna compromise and risk the millions and millions of dollars they're making for some side bets.

But one thing that's really striking to me is you can bet on anything on those platforms, and I mean, there's some obscure game in a mid-major [00:10:00] Division 1 NCAA basketball team that, I don't know if the lead scorer can tank that game and his friends all put a few thousand on the game, it just seems like once you penetrate down to amateur sports and the kind of sports you could bet on that there's just a ton of opportunities for exactly the kind of corruption and point shaving and thrown games that took down Major League Baseball at one point.

ERIC LIPTON: Right I mean, the bets are not simply about who wins and loses. There's the prop bets that allow you to bet on individual plays and rushing yards, receiving yards, receptions, touchdowns, interceptions, points, rebounds, assists, steals, blocks, three-pointers. I mean, there's all kinds of little things you can bet on beyond the winner and loser. The professional leagues do prohibit their players from betting. And for example, recently there were I think five NFL players that were punished, and they're tracking their players because they have the capacity to see who's betting. Every time a bet is made in the United States, there's a company called GeoComply, which gets pinged. And it can tell you who's [00:11:00] betting and the exact location of that person. And their computer authorizes every single bet and all the platforms contract with GeoComply and so they know who's betting and they know where that person is. And it allows a compliance to know, assuming they're not using someone else's phone, to know who's betting.

CHRIS HAYES - HOST, WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?: Oh, wait a second. Let's stop there. I don't think I quite realized. So there's a monopoly company that has the contracts with everyone, that is the compliance company, such that if I'm the starting shooting guard on Iona, which is a college here in the New York area, that's not like a big, huge NCAA player, but a Division 1 team. And if I'm a good player, if I'm gonna make a few extra thousand with a good bet

against my own points tonight, this GeoComply basically would know it's my phone if I tried to make it myself?

ERIC LIPTON: Assuming it's your phone, yes. Every single bet goes to GeoComply and they have to sign off on that bet based on where you are located, because they have to know, like for example, in Washington, DC, If you're in Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC, that's a Federal park. You can't [00:12:00] bet in a Federal park. If you're across the street from a Federal park, you can bet. So your exact location has to be known. And that's one of the reasons why, you know, it's the Uberization of cell phones. It's like that Uber, that technology that Uber developed, the reason we have mobile betting now is that the technology, it's only in the last decade that the technology has existed, the latency, the accuracy, the confirmation ability, all of that, and that's what Daily Fantasy Sports really demonstrated is that these phones were incredible tools for online betting. And it was only once that revolution occurred that the company saw that and they realized, we gotta grab this.

CHRIS HAYES - HOST, WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?: So after the 2018 Supreme Court ruling, it's a little bit of like, okay, any state that can manage to legalize this, can do this. What happens, what do those state campaigns look like in terms of getting states to legalize it?

ERIC LIPTON: They're really phenomenal in scale lobbying exercises, I mean, dozens of lobbyists.

CHRIS HAYES - HOST, WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?: I feel that, I mean everything, that everything on this topic [00:13:00] seems phenomenal in scale. Every time I see anything having to do with sports betting, even just an ad, I'm like, I feel like that ad costs \$5 million to make. Where are these people getting all this money?

ERIC LIPTON: It's actually a billion and a half dollars a year that the gambling companies are now spending on TV and radio advertising. It's an enormous amount of money. But the state campaigns are enormous and elaborate. The thing that I've seen in sports betting is that basically they, for the most part get it passed when the industry decides what it wants collectively. If you have disagreement between the casinos and FanDuel and DraftKings, or disagreement between the video poker player companies and the casinos, or between the Native American tribes and the casinos. If there's any fratricide, for example, in California where you had the Native American tribes and FanDuel and DraftKings going at each other, they spend more than \$500 million on competing referendums, and it goes down in ashes. The fratricide is the thing that stops the ball from rolling on the passage of more sports betting the United

States. So in Missouri, for example, right [00:14:00] now, it looks like they're past another year even though the Kansas City has had such success with its teams recently, it looks like another year will go by where they will not have sports betting. And that's because the video slots companies desperately want a cut of the bill, they wanna have their piece, they wanna have their 10,000 units of video slots in gas stations. And unless they get that, they keep killing the bill with their patron in the legislature, Danny Hoskins.

And so what I see in the States is it basically have the professional leagues have their own lobbyists, the casinos have their own lobbyists, the video slots people have their own lobbyists, and the Native American tribes have lobbyists, and you'll get like dozens and dozens of lobbyists and they're all there in the rotunda hanging out as these things are being debated and they're working their friends in the legislature to get the language in a way that meets their interest.

Gambling controversy continues to hit the NFL, MORE Players suspended - The Domonique Foxworth Show - Air Date 6-29-23

DOMONIQUE FOXWORTH - HOST, THE DOMONIQUE FOXWORTH SHOW: As money gets more important to these sports leagues, as they operate more and more like businesses and less like teams, the customer changes. And while the customer is still partially the fan, it's [00:15:00] also sponsors and it's also these gambling companies. And their revenue is tied to how true they are to the image that they project.

And what I mean by that is, this is an entertainment property, but it's not pure entertainment, like a TV show, a movie or maybe wrestling would be the example, like, WWE professional wrestling-type stuff. Because they are not trying to trick us into believing that pro wrestling is real, and that hurts how valuable media property it is.

The premise, or one of the biggest catalysts to why sports franchise values have jumped so much recently is because it's one of the last places that it's must-see because this stuff is not scripted. It's live, it matters, and there's connection to your... there's civic pride. And I think this kind of dovetails on the conversation I want to have later.

But the reason why I bring that up is because they've never made a [00:16:00] decision in the past that is this big, that puts that core thing so much at risk, as they have recently. And campaigning and lobbying to legalize gambling is something that all the pro sports leagues were doing because they were running out of ways to maximize the revenue in their current stream, so they were like, You know what, let's open a new stream. And it's something that they always said in the past that they were hugely opposed to, was gambling companies.

And I remember quite clearly when I was, I wasn't president of the union at this point, I was on executive committee of the union and we were talking about moving the Pro Bowl from Hawaii. And they're like, Where should we put the Pro Bowl? Should we go to a bunch of different cities? And I remember saying, it was probably a year after the all NBA All-Star game was in Vegas, I remember saying in a small meeting with Roger Goodell, I told him, I requested, Let's put it in Vegas. I love Vegas. It was fun. I would never go to the Pro Bowl. Not because I was a... I wouldn't go to the Pro Bowl to [00:17:00] visit. Like, you think about NBA All-Star weekend, everybody goes to the All Star Weekend. Players who are not playing in the game go there. It's like a fun thing. The All-Star game in um, or the Pro Bowl in Hawaii, it wasn't the same thing. Nobody going to Hawaii, no people were trying to go all the way to Hawaii to hang out to watch the Pro Bowl.

So anyway, I bring that up to say at that time, their response to that was like, ridiculous. This is a horrible idea for me to even put on the table. And, in their defense, it came like a year after the NBA was there, and if you remember that NBA All-Star game, there were probably four NFL players, I think, three or four NFL players got arrested or got in some sort of trouble. So they're like, we gotta stay out of Vegas. And also we don't want to be that close to gambling. Fast forward to now, they got a team in Vegas and they are in bed with all the major gambling companies and trying to get more money.

So back to the original point. This is the first time that they're putting their most important, like, [00:18:00] pillar, which is the integrity of the game. They're putting it in jeopardy by being close to these companies. And the reason why, and the way that they're trying to protect that is by over punishing players and creating really strict rules around what they can and can't do. I think this is, I know this, I know that perception is as important to them as anything from being around this league a long time and working at the union and all that stuff. But if you don't want to believe me, you can read the, like, five guidelines that they released recently and that kind of makes it quite clear what matters. If you look at it, they're like, we don't want you placing bets from the team facility. I think that's all about perception. They don't want guys on Instagram or on TikTok, like, Yeah, I'm making these bets or whatever on, while they're sitting

there in front of an NFL logo or at a team facility. You can't do it on the road, 'cause the same reason. And the real kicker is, In the NFL [00:19:00] regular season, you can't even step foot into a sports book, which technically you're able to gamble. You can't gamble on your own games, obviously, or the games in your league, but you can't even step foot in a sports book. It's like if you wanted to bet on some basketball games, you should be able to go into a sports book. But you know what looks bad? A pro football player being photographed standing in a sports book because they're playing against the Raiders in Vegas, they're standing in a sports book the night before their game, and then let's say anything happens. The next day that's a real hard story for them to corral.

So, I think, I'm sorry I haven't let you say a word, but I think that's a bunch of the stuff that has just been floating around in my mind and is upsetting. But I find myself in a hard place where I want to be defensive of the players because I recognize that they're putting the players in a tough spot.

ESPN Will NEVER be the Same After This Major Decision - TYT Sports - Air Date 8-12-23

THEO ASH: So ESPN has bought the Barstool Sportsbook and is turning it into its own sportsbook, ESPN BET. And I [00:20:00] think that this is an alarming development just because ESPN is the number one resource for sports news, and now they directly profit off of gambling. Gambling sites and news sites becoming the same thing is terrible. That's a terrible idea. Think back to the NBA draft. The biggest, maybe the second biggest NBA reporter on the planet, Shams, tweeted that Scoot Henderson, "it really is looking like he could go number two to the Hornets".

RICK STROM - HOST, TYT SPORTS: Let's pause here for a second. TheoAshNFL on TikTok is making a fantastic point about how some of the most prominent members of the media, how they could potentially be moving betting lines just from their reporting while having a conflict of interest of working with a sportsbook while trying to maintain a level of efficacy in media.

THEO ASH: This guy works for FanDuel. FanDuel profited immense amounts of money off of this report, and I don't think that this tweet was [00:21:00] meant to mess with the odds, but you gotta bring up the possibility. And I think it's messed up that Shams even works for FanDuel at all. I think it's completely immoral as a journalist, as a reporter, to work for a gambling site.

RICK STROM - HOST, TYT SPORTS: That's exactly right. Nobody, anywhere at any point should have this conflict of interest because what you're doing is potentially suppressing truth so you and your company can profit. Not saying Shams did that, but there is that possibility. Here's the question. Why leave open that door?

THEO ASH: And now how many reporters at ESPN now work for essentially a gambling site? We are now in a situation where it is extremely profitable for ESPN to report inaccurate information because if they say something is gonna happen and everybody bets on it, and then it doesn't happen, they just keep all the profit. Right? I mean, maybe I'm being too harsh, but right? That's, that's how it works.

RICK STROM - HOST, TYT SPORTS: No, you are not being harsh at all. If ESPN's [00:22:00] reporters were to say, Hey, you know, there's a really bad injury and Patrick Mahomes is not gonna be playing, and then he suits up last minute, the betting lines would be, and they would potentially profit from false information.

THEO ASH: So there's that conflict of interest. The other big problem with sports dialogue right now is that regular MFs are getting paid thousands of dollars to spread misinformation on Twitter now. Like, what stage of capitalism are we in where trolling on Twitter and posting fake information on Twitter to get everybody mad and dunking on you is now extremely profitable because you can sell ads under that because people are looking at it.

RICK STROM - HOST, TYT SPORTS: To pause real quick, it's about keeping people there to react and maintain staying pissed off. Any chance Musk has. That's it. It's the same school thought with the Pearl Davis'. I agree with whoever that was on Piers Morgan that she's going to be irrelevant, but the whole [00:23:00] thing she's selling is reactionary stuff, and that's exactly what Musk is selling now on Twitter.

THEO ASH: Again, like I understand how that can be a business model under capitalism, but it's fucked up. It's good, good work should make a bunch of money, not bullshit. I don't know. I look at this industry now and I'm like, it's pretty much in shambles, right? Like, is that fair to say?

RICK STROM - HOST, TYT SPORTS: Yes.

THEO ASH: I don't mind the act of gambling itself, like an individual person putting \$20 on a game, but I hate the gambling industrial complex. I hate the

fantasy industrial complex. I hate the hot take industrial complex. I hate that that is how you're profitable, talking about sports and, I don't know, man. But this page will be talking about personnel at Cardinals training camp and whatnot over the course of the year, I will not bend the knee, and that's my [unintelligible].

RICK STROM - HOST, TYT SPORTS: Alright, I love this guy. So a bit about the news, Penn saw the writing on the wall with [00:24:00] Barstool. Dave Portnoy bought Barstool back the percentage that Penn had from years ago in a deal that was highly criticized. And then ESPN, seeing how they wanna slash \$5.5 billion, but also make more money said, Hmm, one space that we're not in, even though it's a complete conflict of interest, is gambling. So they partnered up with Penn. Penn is paying \$1.5 billion in cash over 10 years, \$500 million in warrants to buy Penn stock. They get exclusive rights to ESPN BET, and it's available in 16 states where it is licensed. The rebrand via espn.com will include a mobile app, website, mobile website, and mutually agreed upon retail locations.

This is incredible for many reasons. Number one: the betting industry accumulated, uh, roughly about \$94 billion in 2022. It's only going to go up. ESPN is [00:25:00] a Goliath in comparison to FanDuel and DraftKings. They are David in this situation, although they have raked in profits. They didn't have the years that ESPN had to build up their own company and their own equity to then go all-in on sports gambling. It seems though, like, this is going to be a humongous problem with reporters trying to do their work, being highly criticized for any reports that they put out that could seem to affect the betting lines and ESPN, essentially it'll be an A to B, they will rake in the profits from misreporting and also the erosion of reporting in journalism that they have put forth over the years. This is a very bad idea. From a business standpoint, I get it. But also remember this: the shams stuff, Adam Schefter bought into a gambling company as well. That's a huge red flag. No one said anything about it, and yet here we are today with the worldwide [00:26:00] leader in sports now getting into gambling.

The Toxic Normalization of Online Gambling - Cara Nicole - Air Date 9-30-22

CARA NICOLE - HOST, CARA NICOLE: So if you're a boomer trapped in a young person's body like me, then you might not be an avid Twitch viewer. But here's the deal. Twitch is a live streaming website where people can live stream themselves playing video games or doing crafts or all these things and build up an audience and interact with fans. And some of these popular Twitch

streamers are being paid millions of dollars in sponsorships with online gambling companies to stream themselves playing online gambling games. This has led to some controversy because the majority of Twitch's audience is quite young. They're impressionable and arguably showing them hours and hours of gambling content isn't the best for their growing minds and might get them into gambling at a very young age.

And before I get any further into this, Video. I want to make my stance crystal clear that I think gambling is an objectively and statistically negative thing for individuals and for society. Yes, we can go back to the consumer free will argument and say that people should be able to gamble if they want to, What's the problem, annoying lady on the internet? Well, the problem [00:27:00] is that gambling isn't something that you can always just walk away from. If you become addicted, it can be devastating. And research shows that the earlier you're exposed to gambling, the more likely you're going to become a problem gambler in adulthood or even earlier.

Many gambling disorders start in adolescence, and this number blew me away, but one out of 25 teens have a gambling problem. This is an issue for several reasons, including that problem gamblers have the highest suicide rates among addicts. The average debt of gambling addicts ranges from \$15,000 for female gamblers and \$55,000-\$90,000 for male gamblers.

Gambling companies are a business, a business that preys on addiction and makes billions of dollars because you, as the gambler, are always set up to lose. And I know stats can be boring, but I think it's important to illustrate how very destructive gambling can be, especially for young people. Which sadly is probably why these online gambling companies are targeting Twitch streamers and celebrities like Drake.

DRAKE: Eddie, what did I tell you? It's my night tonight.

CARA NICOLE - HOST, CARA NICOLE: Oh, [00:28:00] yeah. Drake is in on this crap too. But back to Twitch's online gambling streams, which I think is one of the best representations for how online gambling is trying to position itself right now as digital entertainment. Watching these streams, it feels super dystopian. Like this one with Adin Ross, a 21 year old Twitch streamer who gets paid reportedly \$1 million a week to stream this online gambling stuff by State Casino, who is also the sponsor of Drake and many other streamers.

Like, something about the dealer's suit and mask the gold, the comments in the corner, it's giving major *Squid Game* vibes, which fits because the main

character in *Squid Games* was a gambling addict. So, you know, maybe that's what the aim of this all is for, is just getting a lot of people in debt so that they're forced to play a game of life or death. Is that a joke or is that just a metaphor? You decide.

But what's crazy to me is how distorted a view of reality these gambling streams create. At one point, Adin Ross is down like a million dollars. A million dollars. [00:29:00] You could live off of that the rest of your life. It makes it so the wins and the losses, they don't feel real. You forget that it's even money in the first place. That makes the wins look enormous too. Here he wins \$126,000 in one round. That is multiple amounts of the average salary in the US. That this point, it's just like tokens in a game that feeds into this idea of, like, gambling is just entertainment. It's not real money, and that is a dangerous dissociation to create.

And adding to this idea that these numbers aren't anchored in reality, we have to remember, Adin Ross is being paid \$1 million a week for this stuff. And, conspiracy theory hat here, is he getting subsidized to lose and win a little bit? Like is he being given play money by these online gambling companies to make the wins and losses seem huge because that's more entertaining for viewers? And just so that I'm not picking on Adin or Twitch streamers only, like I said, Drake is doing the exact same thing. It's a misrepresentation of reality where the likes of \$17 [00:30:00] million can just be tossed around, and highlight videos afterwards don't show the losses. Like, according to the comment on the video, Drake lost most of that money during that same stream. That level of misrepresentation distorts the very realities and dangers of gambling where money is real money. It's money outta your bank account. It is money that could have financed your future and your security and your family and your food and rent and all of these things. You forget that, because it feels like a game. It feels like digital entertainment, and these are just tokens to play the game.

But that's not true. And all those losses you're likely to have if you follow the footsteps of your favorite streamers and you do this online gambling, well, according to "hasanabi", those streamers might be making bank every single time you lose.

HASSAN PIKER: A lot of these websites, Stake in all of them, if they have a code, if you are offering a code, that means that Stake is tracking all of your losses and you're getting a percentage of your fan base's losses. They let you in on it, dude. They lay you in on the losses of your f***ing fan base.

CARA NICOLE - HOST, CARA NICOLE: Through these online [00:31:00] gambling partnerships, influencers are profiting off of the addictions of their fan

base, very well possibly being the reason those fans got an addiction in the first place.

Let me be even clearer with this, if this is true, influencers and celebrities like Drake are monetizing off of the financial and mental suffering of the people who look up to them. It is exploitative and a total abuse of one's position, and unfortunately the problem doesn't stop there.

Editing-Cara jumping in here to say that weirdly enough, I've been editing this video this week, and then the news came out that Twitch has officially banned gambling content and gambling streams from their website. I think this is awesome news. Hopefully more companies push against this trend of online gambling. Just wanted to give you guys that update, and back to the video.

Gambling has always been around. That's not new. But what is new is the extreme proximity and easy access we have to gambling on a daily basis. Mix in there some mass media, some tribalism, and a new Supreme Court ruling, and you have the perfect recipe for an [00:32:00] American epidemic in the form of sports betting.

College partnerships are bringing sports betting to campus. Are students safe? - PBS NewsHour - Air Date 2-27-23

SAUL MALEK: I'm winning. Then I feel like an idiot for not betting higher and betting more often.

PAUL SOLOMON: Saul Malek, betting on sports through an online bookie at his Texas college in 2017.

SAUL MALEK: With my strategy, I can make hundreds of dollars in a minute.

PAUL SOLOMON: Once, says Malek:

SAUL MALEK: I was up a few thousand credit that week, and I lost it all betting on someone in an individual tennis game. And I didn't even know if it was a man or a woman.

PAUL SOLOMON: Eventually, he owed nearly 10 different bookies between \$15,000 and \$20,000.

In 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a ban on sports gambling, making it even easier to bet. More than 30 states have legalized sports gambling since, and enticing ads are now everywhere.

KEVIN HART: Two hundred dollars instantly just for betting five bucks.

PAUL SOLOMON: Offering free first bets.

And now five major colleges, Michigan State, LSU, [00:33:00] Maryland, University of Denver, and the University of Colorado, have announced multiyear partnerships with sports betting companies that include placing ads at games, along with promises to, for example, focus on responsible gaming and education.

Colorado was actually paid for bets made using a university promo code, until that deal became public.

ANDY ZIMBALIST: I think it's very scary.

PAUL SOLOMON: Sports economist Andy Zimbalist.

ANDY ZIMBALIST: There are many colleges now that are jumping into bed with sports book companies. They're allowing the sports book companies to come onto campus and to appeal to the students to get involved in gambling.

PAUL SOLOMON: Hey, I gamble on sports. It can be fun, sometimes lots of fun, but, says Zimbalist:

ANDY ZIMBALIST: Six percent of betters tend to become problem or compulsive gamblers. So, we're talking about tens of thousands of students who are likely to become or if they're not already problem gamblers.

PAUL SOLOMON: Students like these at the University of Maryland.

JOEY HAAVIK: [00:34:00] To introduce something like gambling on campus seems like putting kerosene on a fire.

AYELETTE HALBFINGER: If there is supposed to be some sort of educational aspect about betting cultures, the negative ramifications that betting can have on students, particularly at a young age, why aren't we seeing that side of a program?

PAUL SOLOMON: Now, some Maryland students said they like the partnership, but not social work professor Greg Stewart.

GREGORY STEWART: I am concerned that certainly the State of Ohio has made this an option.

PAUL SOLOMON: Stewart studies addiction at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio, where sports betting became legal last month.

GREGORY STEWART: It's so convenient for people to engage in this experience, the use of my phone, and I don't have to go anywhere. I don't have to talk to anyone.

PAUL SOLOMON: You could do it in class.

GREGORY STEWART: You could.

PAUL SOLOMON: And as MIT finance Professor Andy Lo once told me:

ANDREW LO: Neuroscientists have documented that the [00:35:00] component of the brain that gets stimulated when we engage in financial rewards is really the same component that is stimulated by cocaine. It's the dopamine system.

KEITH WHYTE: We have seen a big spike since 2018 in risk for gambling problems.

PAUL SOLOMON: Keith Whyte is tracking that impact at the National Council on Problem Gambling, supported in part by the gaming industry.

KEITH WHYTE: Our national surveys between 2018 and 2021 show a roughly 30 percent increase in risk for gambling problems nationwide. But the majority of that increase in risk is among those young male online gamblers.

People with gambling problems have much higher rates of substance use and abuse. But what we're really concerned about are things like the very, very high rate of depression amongst people with gambling problems and also a very high rate of suicidal behavior.

PAUL SOLOMON: College kids, especially young men, are more vulnerable than most because they think they know sports, they like risk, and they are comfortable doing everything on their [00:36:00] phones.

FMR. GOVERNOR MITCH DANIELS: Much of the promotion that the gaming companies have sought to bring to college campuses seems pretty clearly aimed at building new customers.

PAUL SOLOMON: And that's the problem, says former Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels, who wouldn't allow any betting on Purdue University sports when he was, up until recently, president there.

FMR. GOVERNOR MITCH DANIELS: Young people are facing more emotional and mental and psychological challenges, it appears, than they have before. At a minimum, schools should be careful not to be facilitating, enabling, and, while they're doing so, profiting off the marketing that might spread this behavior further.

PAUL SOLOMON: So, are they? All five universities declined our requests for interviews.

The University of Colorado sent a statement: "The last two years have demonstrated that the necessary safeguards are in place to ensure this agreement is beneficial and safe".

The betting companies involved just didn't respond. But Martin Lycka [00:37:00] of Europe's Entain did. And his is one of the world's largest gambling companies.

MARTIN LYCKA: I strongly believe that any country, including the United States, is much better off having regulated this space and help drive out the black market, the unlicensed bookmakers that afford their customers absolutely no protection tools, no nothing, than continuing to step in the dark.

PAUL SOLOMON: If you were running a university now, would you invite in your company or another sports betting company, or would you say, No no, too much risk, too many young people?

MARTIN LYCKA: I definitely would, because the young people — now, we are filming this right after the Super Bowl, so all of them arguably would have gotten exposed to gambling-related adverts in the TV coverage.

PAUL SOLOMON: But does your company have any deals with universities to do advertising, sponsorship, and the like?

MARTIN LYCKA: No. That is a categorical no. My company has no [00:38:00] commercial partnerships with universities.

PAUL SOLOMON: And will you never?

MARTIN LYCKA: No, we never will for those reasons that you have just alluded to, because a shattering majority of college students are underage. They're under 21, and they have got nothing to do on the gambling side. So that is not our target audience. That is not the industry's target audience.

PAUL SOLOMON: But how can it not be the target audience of firms that partner up? In which case, why should universities allow it?

Well, says a former congressman:

TOM MCMILLEN: I don't think you can stop sports betting on college campuses.

PAUL SOLOMON: Also a former Maryland basketball star, Tom McMillen winces at the partnerships, like his own alma mater's.

TOM MCMILLEN: But this is unique America. that you're going to have betting on campuses, on events on campuses. And I think there are risks to higher education with that, but it is almost inevitable. You have this huge sports [00:39:00] enterprise on campuses across the country. And so universities are adopting it, much like they adopted beer drinking and liquor at football games.

PAUL SOLOMON: As for Saul Malek, he went into rehab four years ago and is still in recovery, still paying off his debts, and more worried than ever about college kids, like he once was.

SAUL MALEK: It doesn't seem like you could just go off to college and lose your entire livelihood gambling, and you just don't know any better.

PAUL SOLOMON: Until, for an estimated tens of thousands of U.S. undergrads a year, if all colleges were to follow suit, it will be too late.

What Happened to Black Activism in Professional Sports? - Edge of Sports - Air Date 7-26-23

DAVE ZIRIN - HOST, EDGE OF SPORTS: We need to talk about the new national pastime sports betting. I'm old enough to remember low the many years ago when Pete Rose was banned for life from Major League Baseball for placing bets on his own team. I remember when Sports League said they would never put a team in Las Vegas because of the very physical proximity [00:40:00] to legal gambling.

I remember when the official line was that the integrity of the game and placing bets could not even exist in the same zip code. Well, fast forward a few decades, hell, a few years, and it's remarkable how much has changed. Now gambling is as much a part of sports as beer commercials. Smartphones have opened the door to sports betting apps, and the leagues have embraced the lucrative bounty created and generated by smartphone gambling.

They've jumped on this with the wanting shamelessness of a puppy licking its bowl. It's dizzying. How quickly the commissioners have made this turn from gambling is evil. To selling it to fans is all fun in Americana. I won't insult your intelligence by explaining this radical shift. It's money, a ton of it, but it's not just the league owners panting with their puppy bulls out sports media like the trendsetter, ESPN, SportsCenter and its tall, [00:41:00] smoothly bald host, Scott Van Pelt.

Are always ready with a special sports betting segment. Also, the most esteemed commentators in the sports media world, like TNT's Studio Hoops team led by Charles Barkley and Kenny Smith now do their own giggly gambling bits. In other words, a massive portion of the economic lifeblood of pro sports from the leagues to the top of the media food chain is being underwritten by sports gambling.

Actually, that's not quite right. It's being underwritten by fans making bets they overwhelmingly lose. It's a regressive tax on fans, sort of like the lottery, except with one vital difference. It's privatized. So instead of money going to build roads or schools, it goes into the pockets of billionaires.

Now, I know some clearly most will say it's all good, clean fun, but this isn't just about sports betting. It's about access to betting and it's about the apps. Yes [00:42:00] anyone, especially in the digital age can gamble when everyone likes, but there's something called a hassle cost that has been eliminated by the apps.

Now if anyone wants to lay down some money, there is no need to find a bookie or even navigate a casino website. Just swipe your finger and as quickly as

checking text messages, you are done. They have taken the most dangerous part of gambling, and I do speak from experience here, and that's that it's addictive and they've combined it with that other great modern addiction, the smartphone. And for the leagues, it's been like cracking open Fort Knox. Now the phone app Giants do have a warning label for gambling addicts, but it's about as sincere as a lung cancer warning on a pack of smokes. The leagues do not care, and as long as the sweet dough trickles down, the players and a now compromised media. No one else is gonna raise a stink about this either.

But as Neil Young wrote, The devil fools with the best laid plans [00:43:00] and wow as old Satan fooled with the plans here because something incredibly predictable has taken place. The players are deciding in every violation of every league rule to place their own bets. As a result, the NFL has just suspended four more players for gambling, and they didn't get any slap on the wrist either.

These players are suspended for the entire 2023 season. It's an incredibly harsh punishment for doing what everyone in the sports world is promoting from the boss to the media, interviewing these players after the game. The sports owners, let's be clear about this, are terrified that if fans think players are operating in a way that compromises the alleged integrity of the games, the financial hit could be catastrophic.

That makes referees as well, who make a fraction of the players' salaries particularly vulnerable to the allure of gambling and players know it. The ugliest [00:44:00] scene from the NBA season on the court was for me when Dallas Maverick Superstar, Luca Doni, late in a close game, started to make dollar signs with his fingers in the ref's face to indicate that he thought the fix was in.

Expect more of that. So it's Vegas for the fans, owners, and media and the Vatican for the players and the refs. And this is a recipe for future disasters. Players will gamble. The commissioner's office will hand out year long suspensions, and the media will get in deeper with gambling companies they should be covering instead of profiting from.

The early sports organizers way back in the late 19th century were terrified of sports betting, fearful that fans would leave in droves if they felt like the outcomes were manipulated. A little more healthy, fear, a little more introspection, a little more critical thinking, and a little less blind devotion to taxing [00:45:00] fans would be a step in the right direction.

But until there is a massive scandal and that day is coming, We can only sit back and watch gambling, swallow the sports world whole.

The Puppets of Online Gambling - Philion - Air Date 4-7-23

PHILIP RUSNACK - HOST, PHILION: Eddie Craven is a 26-year-old multimillionaire who co-founded Stake.com with 28-year-old Bijan Tehrani. Together, they formed EasyGo Gaming based out of Melbourne, Australia. Not much is known about Bijan Tehrani or how these two came together, but Craven can be seen as the face of Stake. He goes by Stake Eddie on YouTube and you can be the judge if this is real or not.

EDDIE CRAVEN: Oh, this is tough decisions. Do we keep going or what? I don't know. I'm thinking, I'm thinking, can we kick on for a bit and like I'm due for that red crazy time. There's no doubt about it. There's no questioning that spin. Slow down, slow down, slow down, slow down, slow down, slow down, slow down. Holy, holy shit. Holy. This is, get the fucking cameras out. I'm fucking recording this [00:46:00] shit. Oh. Oh. This is 20 x crazy time. This is gonna be fucking crazy. This, this. I tell you what, this is gonna be, this here is gonna be fucking record making. You are about to witness history go down here. Holy fucking jejeebers!

PHILIP RUSNACK - HOST, PHILION: Yo, this shit goes 20 x crazy time. Can I start saying that and just steal it?

EasyGo Games is a startup company based out of Australia that builds the games that these casinos use, and right now Stake is valued at over \$1 billion. But how is any of this possible if Australia outlawed online casinos 20 years ago? Craven and Terani have figured out a loophole in Australian law and have been exploiting it for years. Online casinos are prohibited in Australia, so long as you don't advertise or serve anyone in Australia. If they're able to outsource the licensing and they don't explicitly advertise in Australia, then technically they're in the clear.

So how did this website get so big? This is not Craven and Tehrani's first [00:47:00] rodeo. Over eight years ago, they launched PrimeDice and according to Craven himself, PrimeDice was the biggest Bitcoin gambling website at the time. In 2015, Craven posted on the Bitcoin.com forums under the alias Edward Miroslav: "Do you consider offering gambling to be a moral issue? Is your view if we wouldn't offer it, they would gamble on another site? Or do you think that

some people may have started gambling by finding PrimeDice and maybe wouldn't have started otherwise? What percentage of PrimeDice players do you think are underage? Do you consider it an issue that players do not have to provide any personal data?" Craven responds by saying, "I don't consider it to be a moral issue. I view it purely as entertainment and enjoy responsible gambling myself. I definitely hit a point where I thought PrimeDice was a net negative for the community, but then I watched site after site scam users out of countless thousands of coins. PrimeDice is a safe haven for people who want to bet, where the user knows the roll will not be manipulated and knows exactly what the odds are. At the end of the day, gambling is the choice of the individual, but what is truly a shame is when casinos fleece [00:48:00] unsuspecting users who think they're getting the advertised odds. Many may disagree, but if PrimeDice and our future offerings can bring provably fair gambling and a lower edge to the masses, we will have definitely impacted this industry in a positive way." The future offerings? Stake.com.

Crypto casinos have exploded in the last three years, and Stake sits at the top of the food chain. Using cryptocurrency instead of actual dollar amounts makes it universally available and evasive for any central government.

The amount of money that we're talking about with Stake.com begins to not make sense the longer you think about it. You'll see streamers lose \$800,000 in a matter of minutes and then recoup it back with a million dollar jackpot moments later.

STREAMER CLIP: I've been sitting here for eight days, 12-hour streams, hundreds of thousands of dollars. Everyone else is happy on every other machine hitting big. I've shown loyalty to you and you just spit in my face. How can you do that to a degenerate gambling addict that's trying to give you everything just to get back more?

Oh oh [00:49:00] oh hundred BET two. Bet. That's multiple 60,000 back. Shit. 20 K. Oh my God! Oh my!

PHILIP RUSNACK - HOST, PHILION: You see, gambling is oftentimes compared to other vices like tobacco and alcohol. Although all of them can ruin your life, one of them has mathematical odds stacked against you. It is no secret that the house always has an edge. The game is rigged against you. Yet people still voluntarily partake. Whether it be the rush of neurochemicals firing off making people throw their money away, or an addiction that slowly strangles people, it is glaringly obvious that gambling can ruin lives. And while Craven is correct in stating that gambling is an individual's choice, individual's choices

can be influenced. And when you can afford to buy influence, you begin to lose any sort of credibility.

I am about [00:50:00] to explain how the buying power of celebrity advertising through the elaboration likelihood model predicts the persuasive process of Stakes marketing, aka their collaboration with Drake is sinister. According to ELM, people want to hold useful, accurate attitudes. An attitude is defined as an enduring way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, and it has a valence. It's either positive or negative.

This theory states that, one, messages are persuasive if they produce favorable thoughts. Odds are you are not going to be persuaded if something is very annoying. Number two, people's abilities to process information varies. Elaboration is the extent to which someone thinks about issue-relevant information and elaboration likelihood is the probability that high elaboration will occur.

This will all start to make sense once we apply it to Stake's advertising campaigns. If we take a look at Drake's collaboration with Stake.com, it's obvious that he's not going to give us the scientific objective data arguing why we should be gambling. If he did, that would be an example of [00:51:00] high elaboration. Instead, we can see a prime example of a message source -- gamble with Stake -- with low elaboration. The parameters that dictate a message source include expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Expertise only persuades if we know that the message source is an expert going into the message.

It's safe to say that Drake is not an expert. This collaboration came out of nowhere. Trustworthiness can be measured if the message is unbiased and objective. In this case, Drake's collaboration with Stake is biased, because he's being paid millions of dollars, and subjective because he promotes this company with low elaboration.

The attractiveness of a messenger is more persuasive with low elaboration, meaning the more you think about the message, the less important the actual attractiveness of the source is. But remember, celebrity advertising is banking on low elaboration. You're not supposed to be sitting there critically thinking about why he's collaborating with Stake. That's why Drake's attractiveness matters in this context.

[00:52:00] According to elaboration likelihood model, there are two ways that people digest information. Number one is central route processing. This is when

elaboration is high and people can be seen paying attention to every little detail. Number two is peripheral route processing, where elaboration is low and you start to notice the less important things. Celebrity endorsements operate using peripheral route processing. They're banking on the fact that you'll be so enamored or distracted to actually think hard enough to scrutinize the message being delivered. Most people don't just use one route of processing or the other, but actually both interchangeably to varying degrees based on certain personality traits such as relevance.

Most people can't relate to online gambling, but we've been socially conditioned to accept Drake as part of pop culture. Everybody knows Drake. This can be seen when people are fanning money and screaming in excitement whenever Drake gives them money.[00:53:00]

The other personality characteristic that dictates how you process information is one's need for cognition. Is your brain smoother than a chicken cutlet or are you a wrinkly brain Chad? This really just depends on if you're smart or not. Are you on the edge of your seat thinking that Stake.com is cool because Drake said so? Or do you make a mini documentary about the ins and outs of mass communication and its effects on audiences as a whole? It is obvious that no solid information or arguments can convince people why you should gamble away your money online. The only thing in this advertisement is Drake's name attached to it, and he even said that he's going to give back to the people.

This world is diseased. Stake.com's commercials are designed to appeal to the peripheral processing route. They're literally telling you that you're too stupid and lack the cognitive ability to read deeper. I know this because it's impossible to design a central processing route message when it comes to gambling. It is a degenerative activity, proven time and time again to produce net negative results.

This is [00:54:00] precisely why celebrity advertising is Stake.com's favorite way of marketing. Stake is the master of puppets, pulling the strings of their pawns across the globe. They offer a disgusting amount of money to streamers, celebrities, and organizations in order to inject their brand into pop culture. Drake, the UFC and Twitch streamers are just the start of it.

All of these people in corporations are abusing their parasocial relationships that got them in their position in the first place, while insulting the intelligence of their audience, all while hiding behind weak arguments and coping mechanisms to justify their sponsorship.

How Australian sports make money from gambling - Full Story - Air Date 5-10-23

JANE LEE - HOST, FULL STORY: Henry, I don't watch a lot of footy, but when I do it does seem like there are a lot of ads to sports gambling.

GAMBLING AD: On top of their already great odds. Ladbrokes now gives you odds boost

JANE LEE - HOST, FULL STORY: They're on the side of the stadium, um, on the jerseys and also. On many of the ad breaks between plays.

GAMBLING AD: As the official wagering partner of the AFL Crown Bet's Advanced mobile app.

You just gotta take the money and run. BET 3 6 5, the world's favorite online sports betting company. [00:55:00]

JANE LEE - HOST, FULL STORY: Is it just me?

HENRY BELOT: It's not you. I do watch a lot of sport and it's everywhere.

JANE LEE - HOST, FULL STORY: Henry Bellow is a reporter for Guardian Australia.

HENRY BELOT: It's not even just on the games you watch, it's in the podcasts you listen to.

If you go online to read about football, oh my God, there's another gambling advertisement. Why won't they go away? We've had several studies that show there's hundreds of gambling ads on Free to Air tele every day. We've got to a point, Jane, where there's evidence that Australian children can recite gambling advertisements.

They identify brand colors, they know the odds of games because they're read out before the games start. Even professional players are worried that kids just. Can't actually divorce the game itself from the gambling odds. We know that fans hate it. There's a study by the A F L Fans Association. They interviewed 3000 people.

They found that the volume of gambling ads was the most common concern. Three quarters of them [00:56:00] said that they would support a ban. It also doesn't matter who you talk to in politics, liberal labor nationals, independent mps, they all think the volume of ads is too much.

JANE LEE - HOST, FULL STORY: So if everyone hates gambling ads, why are there still so many of them during sports?

HENRY BELOT: Essentially it's because there's a massive amount of money that's being made. And so the outrage from the fans, from players, from some clubs is not enough to actually change what the code is doing. And we've got to the point where the head of a parliamentary inquiry looking into this very topic says that there's overwhelming evidence for change to actually happen here.

But the problem is the gambling companies, the sporting codes, the broadcasters who play the ads, they're all making big money off gambling, and they're all to varying extents trying to push back against change. And that's why we've got this really uncomfortable tension that's going on right now between fans who are watching the games, the players themselves, and the executives who are making money.

And we've gotta remember that [00:57:00] Australians have the highest gambling losses per person in the world. There's a lot of money at stake here and there's also a lot of social harm that's being done right now in our communities.

JANE LEE - HOST, FULL STORY: Hmm. I mean, it's interesting that despite all of these harms and all these concerns that we've got from the fans and and from government, in fact, Australian sports are not just stopping at making money off the local gambling market.

They're actually moving to the US now that we know that the US is legalizing online gambling. What's that all about?

HENRY BELOT: Yeah. Well, the N R L is really keen to get into the United States, which a lot of people would think, why on earth are we taking Alco to the other side of the world? But what's really going on here is the N R L have recognized that there is a booming sports betting market in the United States where until very recently, there was a federal ban on this happening that's been repealed.

Now there's states that have legalized sports gambling, and people are spending very big money. The N R L, taking a bit of a gamble [00:58:00] thinking that this is going to develop into a huge industry. We want to get in on the ground floor, get people familiar with our product so that when it is legalized in more states, we're there and we're ready.

We can get a cut of that money.

PETER V'LANDYS: Sport is better with gambling. Is that, is that truly what you believe? Look, it's entertainment. You, you don't gamble to to win money. You don't do it to, um, be become rich.

JANE LEE - HOST, FULL STORY: In fact, the head of the rugby league, Peter V'landys said some comments recently that you've reported on that.

Raise some eyebrows. What, what did he say?

PETER V'LANDYS: You do it to entertain yourself. Just like you go to a restaurant and you buy a meal. That's entertainment. As long as you are responsible with what you're spending on. On that entertainment. It's no different than any anything else.

HENRY BELOT: Yeah. So when he was actually at the airport about to fly to Las Vegas to try and negotiate this expansion into the us he was asked by a reporter from Channel nine about some of the criticism about him sort of bringing the game into closer [00:59:00] contact with the gambling industry.

And he did not take a backward step at all. He actually earned that. That's what was happening. That's what shocked so many people.

PETER V'LANDYS: Now you'll get blowback from anti-gambling mobs who don't like the idea that, you know, you're encouraging gambling and sport together. No, I'm encouraging entertainment. As I said, if you treat gambling as entertainment and you budget yourself to

have so much on that entertainment, there's no, no problem with it.

HENRY BELOT: And, and this is the comment that I've spoken to some people who have gambling addictions that they were so upset when they heard, I've spoken to people who have lost their superannuation because they had to pay off their debts to gambling companies because they loved sport and they kept getting hit with these advertisements and they fell into real financial ruin.

And for them to hear somebody who's running the organization compare what happened to them to going to a restaurant to buy a meal, it caused a lot of anger for them. But I think if you take a step [01:00:00] back, what it really does is, is just show that the head of the N R L is starting to think of his own sport in the same way that gambling companies think of it, that it's an opportunity.

To make money. Yes. Sport is an entertainment product. That's why we love it. That's why so many people watch it. But many people felt that he didn't really take responsibility and ownership of some of the social harms that happen alongside this, that that was diminished in the pursuit of profit.

Summary 9-3-23

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: We've just heard clips today starting with Windover Productions tracing the story from fantasy sports to sports gambling. Why is this happening discussed the threat to the legitimacy of sports and the process by which it was legalized. The Dominique Foxworth Show explained the impact of sports teams getting in bed with gambling companies.

TYT Sports looked at the impact of ESPN purchasing a gambling platform. Cara Nicole described how influencers are being used to market gambling to a young audience. [01:01:00] The PBS NewsHour looked into partnerships between gambling companies and colleges. And Edge of Sports commented on the destructive impacts of gambling swallowing the sports world.

That's what everybody heard, but members also heard additional bonus clips. The first from Phyllian looking at a case study of a gambling company using celebrity influencers to target gambling addicts. And, full story, discussed the social harm of gambling on Australian sports. To hear that, and have all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly to the new members only podcast feed that you'll receive, sign up to support the show at bestoftheleft.com/support, or shoot me an email requesting a financial hardship membership, because we don't let a lack of funds stand in the way of hearing more information. And now, we'll hear from you.

Buddhist teachings and A.I. - Craig from Ohio

VOICEMAILER CRAIG FROM OHIO: Hello, *Best of the Left*, it's Craig from Ohio, and it's been a while since I've called but I thought I wanted to just

give you a quick thanks [01:02:00] for playing that dharma talk at the end of the episode on artificial intelligence, because it got at something that I've been thinking about artificial intelligence, but I have not heard anywhere else, so it was really surprising, I guess -- although I guess it shouldn't be because I familiarized myself with the philosophy of Buddhism oh, about 15 years ago, and to me that made a lot of sense.

Basically the idea that the Buddha I do think laid out a pathway for human happiness, 2500 years or so ago, that involved, first, a practice of contemplation and humility, acceptance that would lead the individual to greater happiness and self-satisfaction or satisfaction with their life, the idea was that that would spread to others. So, perfect yourself, or [01:03:00] if not perfect yourself, at least be on that path and that would help other people.

I, of course, now that we are in the 21st century, we can see two things. One, science has confirmed that a lot of the Buddha's teachings were real, or true. So brain scanning shows that practice of, say, meditation does improve the parts of the mind that help one to be happier, feel more fulfilled, be less stressed, et cetera. And two, we now can see that it has not spread generally to the whole globe. In fact, there is another strain of the human experience that seems to be the poisonous kind which is selfish and it basically sums up by the poisonous ideology of people like Andrew Tate.

So, with artificial intelligence, [01:04:00] as the teacher, the Buddhist -- I think you said is a monk -- said there's a possibility that AI could pick up on what the Buddha counseled that many years ago. But there were a couple problems I saw with that. One is, it's a machine intelligence, and there's no guarantee that a machine will have the same kind of usefulness that humans can put to the practice, the contemplation, et cetera. And the other problem I saw is that there's also just as much likelihood that the bad part of the human experiment will be translated into our machines, the artificial intelligence that we create.

So, I just wanted to point that out, I thought it was really fascinating, and again, thank you for introducing the ideas to a wider audience [01:05:00] because I certainly don't have a platform that I can share with. So that was it. Have a great one everybody. Talk to you later. Bye.

Final comments on the outsized influence of impetuous billionaires

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Thanks to those who call into the voicemail line or write in their messages to be played as VoicedMails. If you'd like to leave a comment or question of your own to be played on the show, you can record or text us a message at 202 999 3991 or send an email to jay at bestoftheleft. Best to Craig for that call we just heard.

I think he's exactly right to be concerned about the direction AI will go. The monk that he was referring to gave a talk that was a members only clip, so if you missed it, that's probably why. The monk and his talk were both written up in The Atlantic, in an article titled, The Monk Who Thinks The World Is Ending.

So he absolutely shares Craig's concerns. The portion of the talk that we highlighted was his proposed answer to that problem. Find a way to inject the values of Buddhism directly into any [01:06:00] future AI projects as protection against the risk of AI taking the other, more destructive path. On another topic related to tech titans having outsized influence on society, I just read an excerpt of Walter Isaacson's new biography on Elon Musk telling some of the story behind his decision to buy Twitter.

Now, to be clear, I don't think that the ownership and management of Twitter is very comparable to the potential impacts of AI. That is not the point. But the insight that I drew from A piece of that article, I think, can be extrapolated. So while describing the final moments leading up to Musk officially deciding to make an offer to buy Twitter, and using quotes from Musk himself, you know, he's an authorized biographer, he was in contact with Musk, Walter Isaacson includes this sentence, quote, Musk was in a manic mood and he was acting impetuously, [01:07:00] end quote.

And that struck me as something Very human. I know what it's like to be in a bit of a mood and to take action without really thinking it through or taking the time to do it right. And as we've seen, that doesn't seem to be a one off thing for Musk. The way he manages Twitter and, you know, turning it into X and all of that, like a lot of his decisions seem to be made in a bit of a manic state while acting impetuously.

So I got thinking about the political conversations we usually have about the rich. There's the don't punish success argument for letting people accumulate as much money as humanly possible. There's the they should pay their fair share argument for taxing the rich at a higher rate. There's the... Money is speech argument for allowing the rich to wield undue influence and power in our politics.

And there's the no money is obviously not speech argument to try to reign that [01:08:00] in, but we don't talk much about the elements of building a stable and functioning society. As relates to the rich. Now, it's generally a conservative idea to slow down the rate of change in society. They want for government to work slowly and for it to be very difficult to make major changes to society because they supposedly value stability.

You know, things not changing means that they are stable. They might not be good, but they're stable. And there is truth in that, you know? I think it's also true that they don't like a lot of the progress that gets made when policies are changed, and so resisting change also fits their ideological Preferences for how society should work, but it really is true that it could be bad for society if changes could be made too quickly.

Even well meaning people could implement a lot of changes very quickly in the hopes of doing a lot of good, [01:09:00] only to realize later that there were unforeseen consequences. Downsides, and so having institutional mechanisms in place that slow down the process by which change is made can help prevent those unforeseen consequences.

There's just more time to debate, more time to hear out concerns, more time to make adjustments if needed, and avoid mistakes. That's the conservative argument for the benefit of having the wheels of government turn slowly. So then it seems like there should be a natural alliance between the right and left when it comes to billionaires and the role of corporations in society.

Elon Musk being in a manic mood and acting impetuously before buying Twitter to reshape it into his own image because he's gone anti woke and wants to reinstate all the white supremacists and conspiracy theorists to the site is about as far from enforcing slow [01:10:00] change for the sake of societal stability as one could imagine.

And Musk just happens to be so flagrant and so public with his mood swings that we all get to see them. Having mood swings and acting impetuously is a completely normal, human thing for people to do. So this isn't a criticism of him for not being a good enough person to be able to make snap decisions that impact millions or billions of people.

It's a reminder that no one should have enough money, power, or influence. To make snap decisions that influence millions or billions of people. As always, keep the comments coming in. You can leave us a voicemail or send us a text

message to 202 999 3991, or keep it old school and email me to jay at bestoftheleft.

com. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show and participation in our bonus [01:11:00] episodes. Thanks to our transcriptionist trio, Ken, Brian, and Lewindy for their volunteer work helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism segments, graphic designing, webmastering, and bonus show co hosting, and thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at bestoftheleft.

com. <https://www.bestoftheLeft.com>. Through our Patreon page or from right inside the Apple Podcast app membership is how you get instant access to our incredibly good bonus episodes. In addition to there being extra content and no ads in all of our regular episodes all through your regular podcast player.

So coming to you from far outside the conventional Wisdom of Washington dc my name is Jay, and this has been the Best of the Left podcast coming to you twice weekly. Thanks entirely to the members and donor to the show from best of the left.com.