

Ian Haney-López Transcript

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Mila Atmos: [00:00:42] Welcome to Future Hindsight, a podcast that takes big ideas about civic life and democracy and turns them into action items for you and me. I'm Mila Atmos. We are running a short survey during the month of April and it's all about you. We want to learn more about what you think of the show. If there's anything you'd like to change. And by taking part in our survey, you could win the chance to be on the show. You can find the survey link and more details in our show notes or at futurehindsight.com.

Mila Atmos: [00:01:21] We've repeatedly discussed race and racism in America on the podcast, and today won't be the last time we talk about it either. What's different today is the frame. We've talked a lot about systemic racism on the show, but today's guest will help us focus on what he calls strategic racism. What if racism is a class weapon that is rooted in making profit for elites? And if that's the case, what are the possible solutions to end racism and to win elections? Ian Haney-López is the Chief Justice Earl Warren Professor of Public Law at the University of California, Berkeley. He specializes in race and racism. His focus for the last decade has been on the use of racism in electoral politics and how to respond. Ian argues that powerful elites exploit social divisions. So no matter what our race, color or ethnicity, our best future requires building cross-racial solidarity. Ian, welcome to feature hindsight. Thank you for joining us.

Ian Haney-López: [00:02:18] Thank you. I'm delighted to be in conversation with you.

Mila Atmos: [00:02:21] To kick us off, you call your approach race, class, fusion, politics. And so I'm wondering if we can help our audience with a quick introduction to what you mean by race, class, fusion politics?

Ian Haney-López: [00:02:33] Well, I think the place to start is with this idea that the way most of us think about racism is half right, but then it's missing another important half. So the part that's half right is that racism works as a social hierarchy of white over white, especially white over black. I say social, but what I mean is societal. So economics, politics, the military, health care systems, education. Most of us are used to thinking about racism as this hierarchy of white over African Americans in particular, but extends to other groups, people of color. That's half right. It's a very important dynamic. But what relatively few of us today are seeing is that behind that racism, there's a class war going on, and it's a class war that succeeds when powerful elites convince us that the biggest threat in our lives comes from people with different skin colors.

Mila Atmos: [00:03:40] And this race class fusion, it's not new, right?

Ian Haney-López: [00:03:44] This is an older, more radical conception of racism that's been with us since the inception of slavery. We can think about Bacon's rebellion in the 1600s, when poor whites unfree labor from Europe joined together with unfree and at that point increasingly enslaved labor from Africa and rebellion against the plantation class. We can think about the fusion politics movement in the South. Immediately after the Civil War, when whites, impoverished by plantation based slavery, joined together with newly emancipated African Americans to bring progressive politics to the South for several decades. This is the conception of racism used by W.E.B. Dubois to understand reconstruction slavery. It's the model that animates Martin Luther King late in his career when he begins to talk about the necessity of a poor people's movement that simultaneously tackles racism and capitalism. Right. There's this older radical idea. Racism isn't just white people hating people of color. And now to bring it back up to the contemporary era, it's hard to understand why racism is so bad and getting worse today, 50, 60 years after the civil rights movement, until we realize racial hatred and conflict is in the interests of some of the wealthiest, most powerful people in the country, and they are systematically pushing us to hate each other so we won't notice the way in which they're rigging the economy and the government for themselves.

Mila Atmos: [00:05:25] You were just talking about W.E.B. Dubois and Martin Luther King, and they were practicing essentially race, class, fusion politics in a more radical fashion. So how is the modern version different?

Ian Haney-López: [00:05:38] The modern version is, in a sense, equally radical. The modern version requires us to say two things. One, that we are in a class war, that the very rich are winning and we're losing control over not just our economy, but our government, our prospects for a survivable climate. It's not just that pensions have gone, that wages have stagnated, that wealth is accumulating in the economic stratosphere is that this is actually costing us democracy. It's costing us the ability to slow or reverse climate collapse as common sense as that is that. As for radical in American politics, here's the other thing that we need to say. Racism is getting worse. Racism is virulent. It's vicious. Government itself is very often engaged in systematic violence against communities of color. And these two things are linked. Class war is succeeding to the extent that politicians use racial fear and division to win elections, and then when they win elections, they turn around and govern on the interests of the wealthy and also use government violence to try and create a theater of racial threat. So think about mass incarceration or think about mass deportation. The source of that is not any particular threat or danger from people of color.

Ian Haney-López: [00:07:12] The source of that is this desire by politicians to communicate that the danger we face is other people with different skin colors. Meanwhile, they continue to pass massive tax cuts for the very rich or to do other favors for large corporations. Maybe, let me try it a different way, Mila. Maybe the real radicalism of race-class fusion politics today is the core radicalism of American democracy. Democracy at its inception was a way of pushing power downward and outward, to resist the tendency of power to concentrate in the hands of the few and to push it downward and outward. That was the radical ideal cabined 200 plus years ago, by race, by gender, by property ownership. But the idea was if we could see our fates linked, if we could join together in a democracy where all people were created equal, we could take power from the wealthy and powerful few and redistribute it outward, so that we all had a say in the direction of our society. That's democracy at its most radical. That's race-class fusion politics today.

Mila Atmos: [00:08:36] I like the way that you link that together with the radicalism of democracy. So I have heard you speak in other venues and talk about your journey to come up with the messaging of race- class fusion politics, indeed that we in fact, need to believe it. So what was your journey?

Ian Haney-López: [00:08:55] You know, it was actually a big change for me. So I'm a scholar of race and racism. I've been deeply interested in the subject since graduate school, since law school. I had the privilege to study with Derrick Bell, one of the founders of Critical Race Theory. And for decades I thought about racism in a way that I think most people still do in the contemporary era. I really thought that racism fundamentally was white over non-white hierarchy -- was white racism against people of color. Now, Barack Obama gets elected in 2008. And this is an important moment. Many of us who studied race, we knew that racism remained pervasive, but we also expected to see big political changes, big practical changes. And in particular, I, among others, expected to see the Obama administration dismantle what we now call racialized mass incarceration. We may have 5% of the world's population, but we have 20 to 25% of the world's prisoners. We imprison more people than any country but Russia. At the same time, we've never imprisoned as many people in the history of the country, and we disproportionately imprison black and brown people. And I thought this is a classic example of systemic racism. Barack Obama, he's committed to fighting racism. He's going to dismantle this. But he didn't. And not only did he not dismantle mass incarceration. He actually exported the techniques of state violence against African-American communities. He exported that to the deportation context.

Ian Haney-López: [00:10:46] The Obama administration deported more people on a sustained basis than any other administration in the history of the country, and it was disproportionately targeted at Latinos. So now here I am as a scholar of race and racism, thinking to myself, racism is fundamentally white racism. And then I'm looking at Barack Obama saying, "but he's not dismantling it. He's making it worse. Is he a white racist or is he sympathetic to white racism?" And the answer is clearly no. And so it was a shock. It was a moment when I had to say, I don't understand how racism is working in this country. That moment led me to really think about, "well, what is Obama doing? Where did mass incarceration come from? What is he responding to?" And the more I looked at it that way, the more I realized Obama was engaged in politics, a politics around mass incarceration that said, "Democrats are weak on crime. Democrats are

more sympathetic to criminals, to gangbangers, to thugs, to super predators, than they are to victims or the silent majority." And a politics that said, "Democrats want to throw open the borders. They want to flood the country with illegal aliens. They want to replace the heartland." In other words, Obama is engaged in normal politics. But I came to understand, normal politics didn't mean it wasn't racism. It meant, rather, that racism had become normalized as political rhetoric.

Mila Atmos: [00:12:35] And so where does that shift come from, to racialized rhetoric as normal politics? Where did it start?

Ian Haney-López: [00:12:41] This got its start and then continued to derive much of its fuel from reactionary, wealthy elites. This move to using racism as the main language of American politics and as the main basis for sorting between Republicans and Democrats. It started with this fringe Republican candidate, Barry Goldwater, who had this 19th century vision of making sure that we would live in a Lord of the Flies society, that that government would be rolled back, that it wouldn't do anything for working people. That he would undo the New Deal. And Goldwater knew that that sort of regressive economic policy was deeply unpopular. So instead, he campaigned on racial themes and he lost. But his triumph in the South, where he won many of the deep Southern states, became a template for what Republicans would do through Richard Nixon and especially through Ronald Reagan and so on, all the way to Donald Trump. Republicans have understood that they can hide the fact that they remain, as they used to proudly proclaim, the party of big business. They can hide that fact and instead wrap themselves in the mantle of populism. If it's a mantle of white nationalism expressed in coded terms. And so this was really the profound shift in my own thinking. To see that I had, I as a scholar of racism, as a professor who teaches race and racism at the University of California, Berkeley, I just gotten it wrong. Or in terms that I used earlier, I was only half right. Yes, racism is a hierarchy of white over non white, but that's not the sum total of it. And indeed much of the energy for it and much of its persistence, much of its virulence, can be explained by looking behind the surface of white over non-white to see who funds it, who promotes it, who continually reinvents it, and who profits from it.

Mila Atmos: [00:15:02] Right. I like the way that your journey has basically shown us how big business is masked in this language. So now let's dig into the doing. Often we

talk, when we talk about race, right, we hear that we need to have difficult conversations. And reading your work though, especially *Merge Left*, I don't understand it as an appeal to have more conversations, but actually about taking concrete, tangible actions. So can you talk about some of the practical ways to build race-class fusion politics?

Ian Haney-López: [00:15:35] Sure. So once I'd taken this intellectual journey myself and came to understand that that racism had become the normal language of American politics, I wrote a book called *Dog Whistle Politics* that essentially explained that history with a real focus on the period 1964 to 2012. Once that book came out, that attracted a lot of attention from foundations and especially from the labor movement, the AFL-CIO initially, and they said, "we really see the way in which racism is being used even to convince many of our union members to vote for politicians whose ultimate goal is to break union power and to transfer wealth upward. But we're not sure you can actually translate this into practical terms." And so that was the real impetus for me reaching out to communication specialists and then to pollsters and then running focus groups. And it was another really enormous learning process for me. I had been used to talking about race and racism within the academy to very bright and very talented students to a cohort of highly trained colleagues across the universities. And the challenge was to talk about race with regular folks who weren't paying a whole lot of attention, which is most voters. Probably the most stunning thing in talking to people in different focus groups is people are really unclear what racism is. And sometimes they're so unclear that they have a sort of a gut sense that racism is just being mean to other people, even on the basis of, like, gender. You know, I was listening to a focus group and somebody said, "wow, Donald Trump treats women really bad."

Ian Haney-López: [00:17:27] His racism is to treat women badly. And one part of me is like from a scholar, I'm like, sorry, that's patriarchy and misogyny and sexism. OK -- one insight is, hey, we need much simpler language. But here's the other insight. And this really blew me away. People grasped immediately two things about our society that we just did not have to explain in these focus groups. The first thing they grasped is we're really at each other's throats, we're really divided, and divisions are worse than they have been in the past. People don't like it. They know it's true. They don't like it. And the other thing they grasped is that the main systems aren't working for them anymore, that the economy is rigged, the government's rigged, the politicians don't listen to them, that

things are really hard and they have very little control over their lives. And so when we try to put those together in simple language, when we said, "We're all in this together, but some people are encouraging us to go after our neighbors, to attack each other. Because when we do, we're too busy fighting each other to notice the way in which they're rigging the system for themselves." People were like, "Yeah, I got it. I got it immediately." The easiest conversation to have with people is a conversation that says, "Whatever our differences, we're in this together." When people try and push you to fear or hate somebody else from a different culture or religion or of a different race. That's probably a con so that they can get you to point the finger over there, while you won't notice that they're taking everything for themselves. Reject the con. Build power with others across difference. That's how you can help yourself. That's a really easy conversation. Now, I want to come back to the way you framed the initial question. And you said, "Very often when we talk about race, we're encouraged to have hard conversations." That's because very often when we're talking about race, we're talking about it within that half right sense of emphasizing that racism is whites against people of color. And that is a hard conversation to have. And the reason it's a hard conversation to have is because we're saying to white people, "it's time for you to grapple with the way you're part of the problem." And we're saying to people of color, "it's time for you to focus on the way in which you're a victim, in the way in which your life and your children's lives will be forever constrained by the fact that millions of people in this country hate you." Those are hard conversations. People do resist them. Now, I want to emphasize we do have to have hard conversations when we try and build genuine cross-racial solidarity. There is hard work to be done. But, we bring people along when we start by saying we're all in this together and the division is a threat to all of us. That gives people a way of saying, okay, "if I'm white and I'm being encouraged to hate others, the problem isn't really with me. The problem is with these people who are encouraging hatred as a strategy. I've got to fight that even if I have to do some hard work examining myself and the way I keep falling for this." And it says to people of color, "you're not hated because there's something inherently wrong with you or your culture or your skin color. You're hated because this is a giant divide and conquer scam."

Ian Haney-López: [00:21:36] Build power with others. And also take a look at the way in which you're being encouraged to fear your neighbors on some other basis. So it says, for example, to the African-American community, are you sure the biggest threat in your life are immigrants? And it says to Latinos and Asian Americans, all that anti-

black racism in your community. Is that really where the threat in your life comes from? Aren't we constantly being pushed to point the finger at each other on these very minor differences when the truth is almost all of the power in the society is concentrated in the hands of a very, very few, and they're not paying their taxes and they're sucking up almost all of the economic benefits? And government is mainly working for them. And we can't protect the climate. We can't get decent health care. We can't retire with security. We can no longer have confidence our children will lead better lives than we did. And it's not because of people with a different sexual orientation or a different sexual identity, or a different religion or a different culture or different accent or skin color. It's because we're being pushed to fight each other in a massive divide and conquer scam.

Mila Atmos: [00:22:58] We're going to take a brief break here to thank our sponsors, Avast and Bambee. And when we come back, Ian Haney-López will show us how race-class fusion politics is the antidote to dog whistle politics. But first, thanks, Avast, for your support. Avast empowers you with digital safety and privacy. No matter who you are, where you are, or how you connect. Enjoy the opportunities that come with being connected on your terms. Avast is a global leader in cyber security for more than 30 years and trusted by over 430 million users. Avast's new all-in-one solution, Avast One, helps you take control of your safety and privacy online through a range of features. Learn more about Avast One at [Avast.com](https://www.avast.com). Avast has many features. Antivirus, for example, stops viruses and malware from harming your devices. And Avast Smart Scan is an optimization scan that finds and removes viruses and fixes the most common issues. Avast's Firewall Protection prevents attacks trying to access your computer or steal your data and Avast PC speedup manages the background data apps use and speeds up your PC. Free and premium versions are available. My favorite feature is Avast Data Breach Monitoring. It finds out if your online accounts have been compromised or your passwords need to be changed. Avast prevents over 1.5 billion attacks every month, and with Avast one, you can confidently take control of your online world without worrying about viruses, phishing attacks, ransomware, hacking attempts, and other cybercrimes. Learn more about Avast One at [Avast.com](https://www.avast.com).

Mila Atmos: [00:24:58] Thanks also to Bambee, an outsourced HR manager for small to midsize businesses. Have you ever been confused on how to handle a situation with an employee? Well, I have, and it was a huge headache. It's no surprise that one

complaint against your company can turn your world upside down. The good news is Bambee is here to help small business owners implement good HR practices. Bambee is an HR platform built for businesses like yours, so you can automate the most important HR practices and get your own dedicated HR manager. Bambee's HR autopilot automates your core policies, workplace training and employee feedback, and your dedicated HR manager will help you navigate the more complex parts of HR and guide you to compliance by phone, email or real time chat. In-house HR managers can cost up to \$80,000 a year, but with Bambee, your dedicated HR manager starts at just \$99 a month. No hidden fees. Cancel any time. You run your business. Let Bambee run your HR. Go to Bambee.com/Hopeful right now to schedule your free HR audit. That's Bambee.com/hopeful, spelled BAM to the B E E.com/Hopeful. And now let's return to our conversation with Ian Haney-López.

Mila Atmos: [00:26:27] As we tape this, the primaries in Ohio are heating up. And I wanted to play you clips from a couple of campaign ads and get your thoughts on them. We're going to hear excerpts from ads from J.D. Vance and Josh Mandel, who are among the candidates competing in the GOP primary to run for Rob Portman's seat. Let's listen. And I'd love to hear your reaction.

JD Vance: [00:26:51] Are you a racist? Do you hate Mexicans? The media calls us racist for wanting to build Trump's wall. They censor us, but it doesn't change the truth. Joe Biden's open border is killing Ohioans with more illegal drugs and more Democrat voters pouring into this country. This issue is personal. I nearly lost my mother to the poison coming across our border. No child should grow up an orphan. I'm J.D. Vance, and I approve this message because whatever they call us, we will put America first.

Josh Mandel: [00:27:21] Critical race Theory is crap. Martin Luther King marched right here. So skin color wouldn't matter. I didn't do two tours in Anbar province, fighting alongside Marines of every color to come home and be called a racist. There's nothing racist about stopping critical race theory and loving America. Josh Mandel. Pro God, pro-gun, pro-Trump. I'm Josh Mandel, and I approve this message. You want a fighter? Send in the Marine.

Mila Atmos: [00:27:51] So what do you think?

Ian Haney-López: [00:27:53] This is classic dog whistle politics in the sense that it's using rhetoric designed to trigger deeply rooted racist resentments and anxieties while allowing people to believe that they are not, in fact expressing or being stampeded by racist fears or anxieties. There's something that's new here, and that is the attacks on critical race theory from Mandel. New also, in the sense of J.D. Vance saying, "are you a racist?" One of the primary messages from the right today is that after the mass mobilizations to protest police killings and police violence against African-Americans in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, there's an effort to say people who are fighting for racial justice don't actually want justice. They want revenge. Be afraid, white people, be very, very afraid. They say they want justice. They don't. They want to create a new racial hierarchy that flips the old one on its head. And in fact, this is coming straight out of the white supremacist movement. And the alt-right now is sort of more sanitized version takes as an article of faith that racial groups are inevitably in conflict and that some racial group must be on top, that there will be a dominant racial group. And the question is which racial group will be dominant? And so what you hear is people like J.D. Vance and Josh Mandel using that frame essentially to say, "When people of color talk about racial justice, they're not actually interested in equality. They're interested in being the new dominant group." You can hear it in J.D. Vance saying "Democrats want open borders to bring in illegal aliens and to bring in Democratic voters." This is uh incredibly extreme to say, "hey, this is the great replacement. Dangerous, pathologically violent, inferior people are being brought across to replace the silent, the hardworking, the patriotic. The taxpayers. The responsible." Highly coded in terms of race. Now the question is, what's the effective response to that? And it's an enormous challenge for progressives. If Vance and Mandel are saying, "hey, white people, they're calling you a racist," and progressives turn around and say, "Hey, J.D. Vance, you're a racist and so's anybody who votes for you. Hey, Josh Mandel, you're a racist. So is anybody who votes for you." Vance and Mandel are just going to rub their hands in glee. That's what they're hoping for. They want to be called racists because it helps them say to their supporters, "see. I'm not racist. This is just common sense. Of course we should protect our borders. Of course, crime is bad, but as soon as I say those things, they call me racist. And by implication, they call you a racist, too." And Trump actually said this in responding to some of Hillary Clinton's attacks, said "she's not just calling me a racist, she's calling you a racist, too." That's the move. That's the racial theater. But here's the important insight: that all depends upon a conversation about racism that accepts a basic frame of racism. It's just white people against people of color.

Ian Haney-López: [00:31:45] When you shift the frame, when you begin to talk about the way in which race is a class weapon used against all of us. Then you can respond to Vance by saying, "Hey. Where's your political support coming from again? Isn't it coming from tech pro billionaires? Aren't your policy proposals actually things like cutting social welfare and cutting taxes for the very rich? Isn't it true that you don't care about most average Ohioans? You really care about winning power. And to win power, you are willing to stoop to these very low depths where you will turn Americans against each other. Push us to hate each other, to fear each other, to fight each other, push racism into public culture just so you can win power for your dark money donors. That's despicable." And same with Josh Mandel. This isn't about taking care of the silent majority. This is about duping average Americans into thinking that people from different countries are the real threat in their lives. When it's the dark money donors who are rigging the system, who are the real threat, it's a completely different political conversation. That's the power of race-class fusion politics. It allows us to respond to Vance and to Mandel not by calling them bigots, but by saying, "You're strategic racists. You're running racism as a con and you're conning everybody. You're conning people, whether they're black Ohioans or brown Ohioans or white Ohioans. You are the sort of person who would promote racial strife. For your own profit. How low is that?"

Mila Atmos: [00:33:51] Where are the places or moments or the politicians who communicate in this way where you see who really, you know, call out the dog whistling as a con -- where you see race-class fusion politics already at work and succeeding?

Ian Haney-López: [00:34:07] Among politicians, you could look at 2018 in Minnesota. Minnesota had a grassroots coalition of religious groups and labor groups who very early on appreciated the power of a race class fusion to deal with dog whistles against immigrants and African-Americans in Minneapolis, Saint Paul, but also to build political power between those constituencies and rural Minnesota, which is overwhelmingly white. They started using race-class fusion now in a really a brilliant campaign that talked about Minnesotans being greater than fear. And the brilliance there was, one: a very pithy statement. When politicians warn about dangerous immigrants or terrorists that they're pandering to fear. And we're greater than that. So greater than fear really captured this idea like we're not going to be fearful of each other. We're on to the con by these politicians. That was one. The other thing that was so clever about this was...

Greater Minnesota was the phrase people use in Minnesota to distinguish rural Minnesota from the cities. And so it was really a way of saying this race-class fusion, this is designed to create a multiracial majority that includes white people. So often when Democrats or progressives talk about a multiracial movement, it's as if they mean a multiracial movement of communities of color. And it's very important to remind white people, you're part of a multiracial society. You can be part of a multiracial majority. And indeed, we will only have an empowered multiracial majority when whites see themselves as equal and welcome members of that multiracial movement. So that's one place. I think the other places you can see it increasingly, labor unions like SEIU have moved to this intentional effort to create multiracial worker solidarity by emphasizing to workers that racism is a weapon of division used by bosses. So one thing that Labor has historically done is it says racism is a weapon of the bosses. Therefore, let's focus only on our shared class interests. Race-class is doing something different. It's saying racism is a weapon of the bosses. Therefore, let's focus on racism and building cross-racial solidarity so that we can achieve our economic and racial justice interests.

Mila Atmos: [00:36:56] One question I have is that, you know, we have been building up to this moment for over 50 years, and now we're at a precipice of democracy. Right. We are in danger of losing democracy itself. And it feels as though, you know, the clock is really ticking down pretty fast. And what you're saying is something that we can use right now. But I feel like it's going to take time, nonetheless. Can we speed this up, especially in light of the 2022 midterm elections?

Ian Haney-López: [00:37:28] I think you're right that there's an immediate crisis looming, the 2022 elections, then the 2024 elections. I think we are on a precipice and we risk losing democracy and collapsing into an authoritarianism from which we might not recover for decades. In some ways, politicians, political consultants, that whole consulting class, they're extremely cautious. They want to get to 50% plus one. They want to do whatever is safest that will get them there. That means that they're going to do the same thing they've been doing for the last 50 years. But that's insanity. We are not in a steady state. Things are getting worse and they've gotten much, much worse very rapidly. And if Democrats keep responding by saying, "well, we'll do what we've done for the last 50 years." We are going to go off of that cliff. What's going to get them to change? It's going to be their constituents. It's going to be people organizing house parties and making calls and making demands and organizing discussion groups. It's

going to have to come from people listening to this now. It's going to have to come from folks who love democracy, who love society, who look at their neighbors and try to have a sense of like, I'm connected to these folks. I want to make sure I live in a society in which we respect each other and people have dignity and we trust each other and we take care of each other and we try and protect each other, especially from the reactionary, powerful few who cynically try and turn us against each other. We have to talk about the way in which division has been weaponized against us. We have to talk about the class war that we have been losing for decades, and we're going to insist that we build power with our neighbors and that we go and grab our political representatives by the lapels and say, "You need to talk about this, too. You need to help us build power with each other so that government actually begins to work for the vast majority of Americans and not simply for the ultra rich."

Mila Atmos: [00:40:02] Right. So as an everyday citizen, an everyday person who loves democracy, what are two tangible things I could be doing?

Ian Haney-López: [00:40:10] Well, I hope this isn't too much like naked self promotion, but the ideas I'm talking about here are both pretty easy to grasp, but also pretty difficult to internalize. They're easy to grasp in the sense that it really does resonate when you say to folks, we're being intentionally divided; let's build power with others. But it's hard to internalize because it really does fly in the face of these understandings that a lot of us have accepted and take for granted about what racism is and how it works and what our position is in respect to racism. So one of the things that I did is I created a free online web course that anybody can take at their own pace. In some ways, it's pretty short. It's 12 videos, but no video is longer than 2 minutes and 20 seconds. Sort of the golden rule of social media. But so it has discussion guides. If you were a complete glutton for punishment or you had too much espresso, you could watch all 12 videos in under half an hour. But it's really designed to allow people to work through this idea. So I think that the number one thing I'd say to folks is, hey, if these ideas resonate with you, then grapple with them a little more deeply, really try and internalize them, go through it one or two or even three times, and then start talking about it with friends, with neighbors, with coworkers, race-class-academy.com. That's the free online resource.

Ian Haney-López: [00:41:52] Once you've got that under your belt, then I think the next thing is, who do I call? Who do I pull together? What groups can I join? Who can I

push? And there are different groups showing up for racial justice, Indivisible, labor groups, church groups, bowling leagues. Like whatever your networks are. Use those networks to begin to articulate this bold, revolutionary idea. And I say revolution. And it's really like American Revolution, like democracy to embrace anew the ideal of the American Revolution. E pluribus unum. Out of many, we form one. That's not just a slogan. That is a practical prescription for how you build power or how you take power from the powerful few. Out of many, one. You create the power of the many by working hard to understand how our fates are linked, by showing others that our well-being depends on their well-being, and their well-being depends on our families being able to thrive. E Pluribus Unum. Recommit to the radicalism of the American Revolution. And then demand that our politicians follow while they pretend to lead.

Mila Atmos: [00:43:18] Thank you. That's really great advice. So as we're closing out our conversation, my final question is, looking into the future, what makes you hopeful?

Ian Haney-López: [00:43:27] I think what makes me hopeful is the American people. And I think this is a surprising answer. Well, for me personally, for two reasons. One. As I said, I've been a scholar of race and racism for decades, and I used to be deeply pessimistic about the American people because I was within a model that said white people are the problem, that there is pervasive, widespread racism among white people. Frankly, I used to think that racism was a permanent feature of American society, so I was deeply, profoundly pessimistic about the majority of people in this country. And the other reason that's a surprise is because I think we've developed a political rhetoric, a common sense rhetoric among progressives in which we point the finger at people voting for Republicans or repeating some of the nonsense they hear from Donald Trump or from QAnon or from Fox News, and we point the finger at them. And so for somebody to say what makes me hopeful is the American people seems to fly in the face of both of those common ways of thinking. But when I started conducting focus groups and actually started talking to Americans, white and Black or brown, Asian American, I realized that, yes, there's a lot of racism out there and also that most people are genuinely convinced that racism is evil, that it's wrong. And very often the same people hold both of those beliefs.

Ian Haney-López: [00:45:18] Yes, people can be stampeded by racial fear. That doesn't mean they're lost forever. It doesn't mean they're terrible people at root and

irretrievably. Those very same people can also see that racial fears are a lie and that their best lives depend on honoring the highest values they already hold of rejecting racism and recognizing our shared humanity. When I think about the millions of people bamboozled by Fox News and Donald Trump and whatnot. I don't blame them. I blame the propaganda networks that have arisen over the last few decades. I blame the sorts of political leaders who are willing to provoke hatred and rage so that they can gain a modicum of power. The Josh Mandels, the J.D. Vance, the Donald Trump, the Ted Cruz, they all know better. They all know better. And yet they're willing to fool people, to bamboozle people, to stampede people, to demagogue people. Ultimately, I'm hopeful in the American people because by talking with them, by holding these focus groups, by testing these messages, it's clear the majority of Americans -- a super majority of Americans -- really want a new story of America that says we're in this together. Some people are intentionally trying to divide us. Let's reject the lies and build power with others across difference. That's the single most popular message with Americans today. That's what gives me hope.

Mila Atmos: [00:47:13] Thank you very much for being on Future Hindsight. I really enjoyed my conversation with you.

Ian Haney-López: [00:47:17] Thank you so much.

Mila Atmos: [00:47:19] Ian Haney-López is the Chief Justice Earl Warren Professor of Public Law at the University of California, Berkeley.

Mila Atmos: [00:47:31] Next time on Future Hindsight. We've talked about having difficult conversations, and when we do, we're really talking about finding common ground. What if we went one step further and actually work together with unlikely partners to find real solutions? Nisha Anand is the CEO of Dream Corps and she'll talk to us about the power of radical common ground.

Nisha Anand: [00:47:53] I have been on a mission my entire life to find a more free and just world. I do believe there's nothing more urgent than freedom. And for that, I will work with anybody who shares those goals, and I think that's okay. A lot of people think, Oh, you just like compromise. That's what common ground is. It's not. I want to win.

Mila Atmos: [00:48:16] You won't want to miss it. On the next episode of Future Hindsight. And one more thing. Remember, you can find our survey link in the show notes and our newsletter. Thank you for your time and look forward to your thoughts. This episode was produced by Zack Travis and Sara Burningham. Until next time, stay engaged.

The Democracy Group: [00:48:43] This podcast is part of the Democracy Group.