

# EPISODE 1W

## HOW THE WEST WAS LOST

Hi there. Welcome to the end of the world. My name is Michael Folz. And this is Episode number one of my podcast Dial It Back Or Die.

Now back in 2017, when I came up with that tag line to start each episode with, I was being more or less ironic. I mean, decades ago I had pretty much foreseen the cultural death spiral that we're going through right now. Going back to around the early 80s I had pretty much figured out the outlines of why this would happen. Not that I knew exactly what year this would happen. Nor did I know the details of exactly how it would happen. Now I did try to explain to people what would happen if we continued on the way we were going. But I was pretty much ignored by pretty much everyone.

Well, time kept moving on. And as the century turned, the left kept getting leftier, and the right kept getting rightier. And both were getting more and more delusional, and neither had much to do with reality any more. The reality being that everyone and everything were getting *squeezed* by *something*, and the social glue, that undefined *thing* that social scientists kept pretending doesn't exist, just kept inexorably dissolving.

Then in 2015 along comes Donald Trump, that disturbingly annoying narcissist and, well, game show host, that guy with his golden toilets and his bar stool opinions, who had been somewhere in the cultural background shadows since back around 1985.

Remember those innocent, old timey days back when I started composing this podcast in 2017? When all we had to worry about was Donald Trump? Before Covid? Before all the uber-woke nonsense? Before we had an obviously senile, eighty year old president who has sent over a hundred billion dollars worth of weapons to neo-Nazi Ukrainians, and whose advisors seem to think that provoking World War 3 is somehow sound political doctrine?

So that here, at the beginning of 2024, *Donald Trump* has started to look like the lesser of two evils? I mean, could you have foreseen any of that as recently as 2017? I certainly couldn't have. Even though, as I said, although I could see this unraveling coming from far away, I had no idea that it would be this fast and this unbelievable.

So here we are, you and me, and everyone else. We're all now in Crazy Land.

Well, if you can call anything about this ‘nice’, the nice part here at the beginning of 2024 is that now a lot of people, especially some really intelligent people, both from the former left and the former right, and even from the former middle, who are finally coming to the realization that the game is up. I mean, you don’t have to be a whiz at chess to look at the board and see that there’s only two moves to checkmate.

Except that, by and large, most of these people who have had their eyes opened as to this being the end of the line for what has now ironically become ‘Western Civilization’, and that even larger group of people who are in the midst of having their eyes opened, all of them really don’t have much of a clue as to how we got here from there. Cultural Marxism? What the hell is that? Rule by the Oligarchs? Aka the rich and powerful? Hasn’t that always been the case?

OR They continue to think that somehow the ‘other’ side was responsible for this. Even though it is now obvious that there isn’t any other side, only a Uniparty, aided by a monolithic ‘mainstream media’, all of which are being increasingly ignored by just about everyone.

And then there are those on the former left who still believe deep down that if only the original, pure ideas of the left had been implemented, then we wouldn’t have all this. And of course there are those on the former right who also still believe deep down that if only the original, pure ideas of the right had been implemented, *then* we wouldn’t have all this.

Nope. Uh-uh. Because even those people who can now see how quickly and completely this train wreck is happening, still don’t know why. A few of them, kind of. But nobody, really.

Which is where I come in. And why this podcast is.

Because what I am going to be doing here is to try to explain to you exactly how and exactly why we—and by ‘we’ I mean the entire Western world—how we have gotten ourselves into this state of affairs. And I can pretty much guarantee to you up front that you almost definitely haven’t heard the argument that I am going to make and the thesis that I am about to submit.

Although in no way am I suggesting that the answer is simple. Quite the opposite, in fact. Well, actually, it is simple. Kind of like the Theory of Relativity is pretty simple once you grasp it. The grasping of it, though, especially when you’ve been taught completely different things your entire life, now that’s a little more complex.

And, just to assure you here at the beginning, I certainly don’t have any sort of wacky ideology or religion that I am pushing. In fact, what you are going to be hearing is a lot of serious stuff: History, Philosophy, the natural sciences and the social sciences. Indeed, even though I promise to stay

completely away from academic jargon, the effect is probably going to be sort of like that of listening to a college course. Although, if I may say so, a really interesting college course.

Or reading it, if you prefer that option. (Which I will get to at the end of this episode.)

Anyway, the reason why I'm going to have to get all intellectual on you is that it is really difficult to state what my thesis is in thirty words or less. Sure, I can do metaphors and analogies. For instance, what if you were one of those people in the fable of the Emperor's New Clothes who was actually seeing the imaginary clothing? Now none of us thinks that we ourselves would ever be that stupid or shallow. But wasn't that the whole point of the fable? And how did the people in the fable then react towards the little boy who pointed out the obvious?

Or consider all of those people who lived in the Soviet Union. Now I'll be going over this point in much more detail in Episode 4. But, contrary to our propaganda, it turns out that the vast majority of Soviet citizens, including people who were highly educated doctors and engineers and historians and scientists, absolutely believed that not only was Marxism a great theory, but that it had also been scientifically proven to be correct. And that whatever problems that they saw around them were just a function of not having been able to implement Marxism correctly.

Sounds crazy, right?

Well, as I've just said, we here in the Western World are now pretty much in Crazy Land ourselves. And, as I've also already said, although I myself had been predicting something like this for decades, still the speed and the vehemence with which it has occurred has shocked even me.

So here's the first hint of what my thesis is: Just like those good Soviet citizens didn't think that they were living in an ideology, but that Marxism actually accurately portrayed Reality, so, too, do we in the West think that what we have been taught is Reality. Whereas in fact it has all just been a bizarre ideology. And just as the Soviet Union fell apart because of the internal contradictions inherent in an insane ideology, so, too, are we in the West falling apart now. Because of our equally insane ideology.

Which nobody in the West believes is an ideology.

See? I told you that you probably haven't heard this one before.

Okay. As they say in science, dramatic claims require dramatic proof. And I don't blame you one bit if you're immediately skeptical about what I've just said. But that's why, as I've already intimated, it's going to take a while for me to, as it were, explain all the details. But if you're willing to hang with me and to give me at least the slightest benefit of the doubt, I believe that I can do that.

Of course, one of the hallmarks of being in Crazy Land is that nobody and nothing seems to make sense any more. The old answers no longer provide an answer.

Because remember: *Everyone* is in the same clown car now. Including the cognitive elite. Ah, the cognitive elite. Those people who aced their SATs many years ago, got into Ivy League schools, and now pretty much control everything. You know, the postmodern Ruling Class.

So that their proposed solutions make no more real sense than Donald Trump's ideas did, either. Except that they make perfect sense, of course, to the cognitive elite, and to the money that supports them. So that these people and entities, from Barack Obama to Bill Gates to the New York Times, are still strutting around in their Emperor's New Clothes, completely oblivious to their own pomposity. Although, to be fair, they, too, are not the cause, but only a symptom.

And you can certainly kid yourself all that you want that if we just got rid of Donald Trump or Joe Biden or Jeff Bezos, then everything would be fine. And I completely agree that to think otherwise is really, really scary. But that's why I'm doing this. Because, yes, unfortunately the truth *is* really, really scary.

Because, no matter what happens politically, either way we're screwed. We're all stewing in this garbage. We can't vote our way out of this.

And that means that even if your political reforms were the most wonderful and well thought out political reforms ever, it wouldn't matter. Because when it comes down to it: It's the culture, stupid. And our Western so-called culture, here at the end of its long disintegration, is totally stupid.

That means that even if all the climate change problems were taken care of, even if carbon emissions got down to zero, even if all the rain forests were regrown, and even if all those cute animals were saved from extinction, it still wouldn't matter.

Because the culture would still be totally stupid.

And that means that even if Silicon Valley achieves infinite bandwidth, and even if they create amazingly successful futuristic mind/machine interfaces, and even if they come up with a way to extend all of our lifetimes to 300 years, it *still* wouldn't matter.

Because the culture would still be so friggin' totally stupid.

And here's one of the scariest parts: Because the way this works is that it doesn't spontaneously get more adult all of a sudden. Crazy Land doesn't get rational all by itself. No, it just keeps spiraling downwards. So that you're just going to get people watching some even more degraded version of

television shows like the Kardashians. You're just going to have idiot leaders even more degraded than Donald Trump or Joe Biden.

Trust me. It's our future.

At least, it was our future back in 2017. Now it's our present.

So let's stop all of this for a moment and let it all sink in. And let me take this moment to point out that I won't be spending the rest of this podcast complaining about how dumb everything and everyone is. No: We're just setting the table here. The rest of this is going to be that enjoyable college course. Because the entire purpose of this podcast is to clearly explain to you how and why we got here. To go back hundreds of years, and explain to you just how certain incredibly bad ideas got baked into what is referred to as Western culture. What's more, I'm going to then explain to you how relatively modern science has totally disproved all of those incredibly bad ideas.

Finally, in the end I'm going to be trying to show you that, lo and behold, when we get through with the science part we'll find that our human nature is a lot more altruistic and cooperative than what we have been generally taught. Further, that, as it were, we evolved in order to be positive. And that it is indeed at least possible to end up with a world of, if not yet peace and love, at least of hope and stability. That there really could be sunlight at the end of all this darkness.

But to get to that point... Well, like I said earlier, it's going to be a long, hard slog to try to convince you that much of what you believe to be true is actually quite wrong. Bonkers even. And it's going to take a lot of that science, a lot of that history, a lot of that social science, and even some philosophy. Although, as mentioned, I'm not going to be academic or abstruse. I'll be minimizing the names and the dates and the math and the footnotes. But also definitely still attempting to not dumb it down.

After all, we've all had more than enough of that by now, haven't we?

So let's get to the next part. Namely, you're no doubt wondering by now: Who is this guy? And why should I be listening to him?

Okay, good questions. And this is the section which is a little awkward for me. Because I'm really not into the idea of self promotion. Even though that seems to be the only game in town these days. Plus my wife says that folks these days like to think that the people that they're listening to have

back stories and personalities. (Oh, and, by the way, that is my wife Maureen singing the intro at the top of this.)

Anyway, here goes my attempt to make myself sound interesting and intelligent.

First of all, I live in the mountains of New Mexico. Which hopefully sounds charming and maybe even a little exotic. Second, having aced my SATs a long, long time ago, I now have a couple of degrees from, of all places, Yale University. And these degrees can best be described as in Social Psychology and Economics.

But I didn't go into the academic life. Partially this was because, once you get into graduate school you see first hand what particular clown cars academic departments can be. Mostly, though, it's because when I went back to college in the early 70s I lived in married student housing. And most everyone else who was there were grad students. And they were the dullest, most boring bunch of grinds that you could possibly imagine.

Not that I'm saying that the academic world doesn't do any good work, or that there aren't any dedicated or interesting people who are part of it. But it's such an easy gig once you get it that, let's face it, no one is going to rock that boat. And even if they wanted to they couldn't, because everything they do is peer reviewed, and those peers certainly aren't going to give up all their wine and cheese parties.

What's more, that old ivory tower thing, the scholar being relatively poor and separate from the world thing, just doesn't exist any more. Which means that those at the top of the academic food chain, the tenured professors at Yale and Harvard and the like, are now pulling down serious bucks. More importantly, they are also part of that group that aced their SATs. And they are therefore now part and parcel of the ruling elite. And what ruling elite in history has ever voluntarily given up its power?

The biggest reason why the academics aren't going to figure out what's really wrong with all of this, though, is that to do so requires a pretty broad knowledge of the science and the history and the social science, etc., that I was talking about. And anyone who wants to pursue a PhD has to get real narrow and real deep right from the get go. So that nowadays when such a person tries to get outside their particular area of expertise, their understanding and insights into other disciplines are often laughably amateurish.

Whereas I, on the other hand...

Actually, I'm proud to confess to having been an omnivorous nerd my entire life. I really enjoy reading about Medieval history and the Cambrian explosion and the Turkish economy and everything

in between. And I still have a half decent memory. Which means that I can bore you with five or ten minute extemporaneous blatherings about the Byzantine Emperor Justinian or 19<sup>th</sup> Century Utopian communities or the search for extrasolar planets or whatever.

Although having spent so much time studying all this extracurricular material means that I never really made the millions of dollars that a Yalie is supposed to make. Which means that I never got to sell a software company or the like, and I can't just hop on a plane and go to Uzbekistan whenever I feel like it.

Howsoever... I have been to Uzbekistan. And 199 other countries. Usually the kind of hard, overland way, traveling on buses and share taxis and the like. Because that's the fun way to do it. And it's also the way that you get to find out what's really going on. And by now the only places I haven't been to are basically war zones and tiny Pacific islands. Not that I have just been checking off countries on a list, either. Because I can also bore you with five or ten minute speeches on the history and culture of every single place that I've ever been to.

But, besides being something cool to brag about, how does this factor into the podcast? Well, a large part of what I will be talking about will be hinging upon the question of what our true human nature really is. And, as I will try to show, modern science has a lot to say about that if we're not being blinded by our preexisting ideology. But a lot of it can also be figured out if we just go out there and try to actually pay attention as to how humans actually behave. Away from our way too over the top First World artificiality and away from our atomized postmodern existence. And what I have found is that there are indeed certain commonalities which seem to exist independently of culture. What's more, I have also found that, on the other hand, certain of the West's beloved so-called human rights really don't matter all that much to the real people walking around in the real rest of the world. Because, guess what? They've got much bigger problems and priorities.

Anyway, there's also a third aspect of me that probably enters into this. And that is that ever since 1968 I've been involved with yoga and meditation and Eastern thought and the like. Not that this means that I'm claiming to be some sort of advanced soul. Or that I'm going to be pushing some specific quote/unquote 'spiritual' bill of goods. In fact, I'm going to be deliberately staying away from anything that is quote/unquote 'spiritual'.

But my particular background does mean that, unlike many of the other social critics and futurists and science explainers who are out there, I'm also not going to be approaching all of this from an automatic point of view of atheism or of a cold meaningless Universe. And this also means that I

am not assuming that the purpose of trying to turn this cultural ship around is to somehow ensure a future of endless dopamine feedback loops. Or of some science fiction techno-utopia fantasy. Because if that were the meaningless case, if that were all that we had to look forward to, then we might as well all just drown right now in all of this empty crassness.

But enough about me. Because it's time to stop with the introduction and start getting into how the next 71 episodes are going to unfold.

Okay. I don't expect that many of you are going to listen to or read all 72 episodes. If you did, that would be wonderful. But it would also involve your having to absorb some 360,000 words.

So, up front, let me try to make this deal with you: Because if you'll commit to just the first five episodes, by then you'll have gotten a certain grounding in what I am trying to get across. And, if you're smart enough and insightful enough, and if you thoroughly digest it, then Episode 5 in and of itself might well explain to you just what our ideology is, and where it has taken us.

You know, to Crazy Land. Because, once you 'get' the foundational assumptions of our ideology, then, if you're smart enough and quick enough, you will see that those assumptions *must* lead to the specific delusion which we have found ourselves in.

So think back to if you've ever known someone who was delusional. And it doesn't matter what the particular delusion was, whether it was religious or political or whatever. And how did that delusion or for that matter any other delusion end? With a soft landing? Did the person happily die with their delusions intact? Maybe. Usually not though. Because, in your own experience, what happened when cold, hard Reality finally did intervene? And was the psychological and/or physical wreckage then much worse than what the original delusions had been set up to defend against?

And up until that final point, what did that delusional person usually do? Double down? Triple down? Just pretend, pretend, pretend?

Well, that's where we are today, here at the beginning of the year 2024. The leaders of the West, all fervent believers in this ideology, are starting horrible, destructive wars, even as their internal societies are falling apart. So why would they do that? Because, as I would submit, they would rather commit Western cultural and/or real physical suicide, than admit defeat for their ideological beliefs.

Which is what's going on these days.



Unfortunately, back to the podcast, it turns out that most people don't 'get it' by Episode 5. And that's for two reasons. The first reason is that once you find out what the foundational assumptions of this ideology are, and who the founder of this ideology was, you'll probably find that all of it is almost beyond comical. And the second reason, as kind of explained in Episodes 2 through 4, is that you, yes you, having lived your life surrounded by this unseen ideology, you also have absorbed some of those foundational assumptions yourself. Not to mention so many of the seemingly wonderful buzzwords. Democracy? But that's the highest of ideals. Isn't it?? Individual Freedom? So is that. And so on and on.

Which is why the rest of this podcast exists. Because the rest of this podcast is going to be an almost encyclopedic proof to—if you want to call it that—my hypothesis.

So let me give you a quick summary as to what will unfold in all of those episodes beyond number 5.

First, Episodes 6 through 12 will more or less continue with this introductory part, and will illuminate various aspects which touch upon this introductory part.

Then we will dive into History. And much of this history might well surprise you. For instance, the Renaissance never happened. The Middle Ages, from around the year 1000, were a time of culture, education, and relative prosperity.

Anyway, so starting with Episodes 13 to 15, we briefly look at the ancient world, the actual foundation of actual Western Civilization. Then in Episodes 16 to 21 we cover the time between around the year 1000 to around the year 1700.

Now, as you'll find out once you delve into all this, the central part of my hypothesis is that the seeds of our cultural destruction were sown back in the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Which means that there will be a lot of episodes covering that period. Namely Episodes 22 through 30.

Then we quickly cover the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Episodes 31 and 32. At which point we put a pause to history at around the year 1900.

And then we start taking up Science. Physical science and social science. And once again you might well be surprised at how much—once you disabuse yourself of ideological blinders—that Science has already found out about the human condition. For instance, not only are we social animals, but we're actually hypersocial animals. And the implications of that have been totally missed by virtually all Western thinkers.

Anyway, we'll get into almost all branches of science through Episodes 33 to 50.

Then we go back to History and back to the year 1900. So that Episodes 51 through 60 then try to cover the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Which leads up to postmodern today.

After that, Episodes 61 to 71 try to figure out how I, were someone to give me a magic wand, how I would make a better world. And, once again, my vision will probably not be like any other vision of the future that you've ever heard.

Not that—given that this is 2024, and it sure looks like everything is swirling down the drain—that I expect anyone to take me up on it.

Finally, Episode 72 tries to summarize some of the major points which I have gone over throughout the podcast. And if you want to cheat and go straight to that, fine. That's better than nothing. But then I'm not sure how much you will have learned. Much better to go through all of those 360,000 words, so that you can thoroughly digest them.

But, of course, I would say that.

Anyway, here at the end of this introduction, I'd like to make a couple of final comments.

Now I would like to hope that by my being rational and rigorous, and by my careful marshaling of the evidence, that you will therefore be readily convinced. But I fully realize that that would be naive.

And I will be going over this next idea in greater detail in the upcoming episodes 3,4,9 & 11, among others. But the truth is that although we all like to think of ourselves as masters of our thoughts, in fact very few of us have spent years up upon that mountain top contemplating first causes. The reality is that our beliefs are primarily a function of our upbringing, our education, our larger cultural surroundings, and our varying personalities. And these beliefs pervade our thoughts so much, and have wormed themselves so thoroughly into our brains, that even when the Truth is as blinding as Truth can get, well, we are often still blind to it.

So if you're coming at this from a skeptical direction, I thoroughly understand that. After all, a lot of what I am going to be discussing you may very well have never heard before. Therefore, all I ask for now is that you approach this with as open a mind as possible. And, of course, continually check to make sure that I am still being rational and rigorous.

Nor do I expect you to believe anything just because I said it. So if any of the evidence does sound strange or suspicious, then do a little research yourself. For instance, before it got woke Wikipedia was actually pretty accurate. And for most academic subjects it still is.

So... Let me tell you up front that nothing I'm about to explain to you would seem weird or extreme to an expert on the subject. Almost none of it is even obscure. It's just straight ahead science and history, etc. And to the extent that you, as a layman, might not have heard it before is primarily because it doesn't fit the ideological narrative.

Funny thing about that.

Although, of course, breaking the ideological narrative is pretty much the whole point of this little exercise...

And one last note. Many of us grew up learning most of what we learned through reading. What's more, not only is each of the episodes full of fascinating things to learn, but for some of it you might want to go back and then go over it again. Anyway, if you go to the podcast's website, which is conveniently named [www.dialitbackordie.com](http://www.dialitbackordie.com), you'll find that each episode has it's own page. And on the bottom of that page is a link for you to get a PDF transcript of said episode. Which you can not only print out for yourself, but also share with friends, etc.

I mean, and not to belabor the point, almost every episode has so much information condensed into around 5,000 words that sometimes I think that almost every episode could become the basis of an entire book. So I wouldn't be surprised that upon first hearing or first reading some very important points might go right past you.

Which is why the website—once again, [www.dialitbackordie.com](http://www.dialitbackordie.com)--is so important.

Plus, not to mention, said website also has some pretty pictures. Many of which I have taken whilst traveling through some of those 200 countries.

Anyway, now the time has come to begin getting to that information. And I would certainly appreciate it if you do decide to come along. In the meantime, though, thank you so much for so far having listened.