

David Bahnsen:

Hello, and welcome to another episode of the Capital Record. I'm your host David Bahnsen of the Bahnsen Group. And today we are bringing on yet another guest as a repeat performer. And it is a very special episode because it's a little off subject from our normal categories of defending free enterprise, talking about the fed, talking about markets. Although I actually do think this topic interacts with all those things in a number of ways, but I'm bringing back on one of the guests we had early on in Capital Record, my very good friend hedge fund extraordinaire, host of the SALT Conference and former white house communications director, Anthony Scaramucci, CEO, and founder of SkyBridge Capital. Anthony, welcome back to Capital Record.

Anthony Scaramucci:

David, thanks for having me on. I apologize that I don't look as old school as you do with the white collar, which is absolutely fantastic. I was on vacation and so I don't have my typical Brioni with me, so I apologize for that, but I'm happy to be on. And I had a great time last time.

David Bahnsen:

Now, your Brioni's custom, they're tailored or do you do like Trump did where he would buy a \$20,000 suit, but then not get it tailored?

Anthony Scaramucci:

No, my stuff's totally tailored, come on. Let me tell you something. As you know I grew up in a blue collar family. I tell a very funny story about my first job interview at Goldman. I'm in 100% polyester, I've got a black widow tie on I'm fully flammable. My shirt is actually polyester because you could just throw those in the washer and dryer. And the partner from Goldman says, "You're a smart kid, but you are the worst dressed person that we've met at the Harvard Law School." So from that day forward, all I did was buy high design fabrics. What can I tell you? Snobbery.

David Bahnsen:

Dress for the job you want.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Yeah. Listen, you got to do that. I feel like intellectually, we're going to spar here a little bit and I feel you're out dressing me. I almost feel like running down the block to get a tie.

David Bahnsen:

It was a power move on my part.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Yes. Yeah, you're doing well, you look good.

Anthony Scaramucci:

You are an intellectual giant, but I do think we disagree on a few things. So I appreciate you bringing me on so that I could at least share my views and also give my assessment of what's going on in terms of our foreign adversaries, infecting our society and really driving divisions in our tribes and our culture.

David Bahnsen:

Yes. So let me set this up for the audience real quick, and I will make a couple of things real clear when he talks about us disagreeing. It's an interesting disagreement because it's one in which there's a lot of overlap, but we're going to talk about the issue of vaccinations. We're talking about Delta variant, we're talking about COVID. All of this stuff, the entire COVID ecosystem has generated a lot of discussion for a year and a half. There's people who have strongly held opinions, and there's people that have changed strongly held opinions, there's people that have fought with others about them, there's all this stuff. Like most things in society, there's a lot of division, tribalization. Here's the one thing that may let some of you down a little, Anthony and I are not here to break up a friendship over a disagreement on the issue.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Exactly.

David Bahnsen:

There are shared premises that we both have, which is that we desperately want safety of the American people, we want good policy response. There may be differences and tactics and things, but no, we're here to hash out some things. And why I said earlier I think it does have some connectivity to free enterprise, to freedom, to Capital Records mission, is obviously from head to toe COVID has economic repercussions. It has political touch points. And so this really does, I think, belong in Capital Record. And I'm going to start by just letting Anthony do what he said. I'd like you to just lay out what your position is now. A lot of these things were highlighted in an interview you did with William Cohen, well-known Vanity Fair writer, I read some of it last week. I took exception to a couple of the things you said, not everything. I texted you, you cussed at me, I cussed back at you. And now here we are on Capital Record to talk about it like grownups.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Well, let me say one thing about our society from an intellectual perspective. We've gone back to fuses. When I was a kid, I remember my dad switching out the fuses in our house and putting in circuit breakers. And he did it himself, he was a blue collar guy, thank God he didn't blow the house up. But a fuse, it burns out. So if somebody disagrees in our society now, the fuse burns out and then that's it. We now are polarized, we hate each other, we send invective towards each other and all of the polemics associated there too. I want to go back to circuit breakers intellectually, where we can have a disagreement, the circuit breaker snaps, and you flip the switch, you put it back on. It is so important for us right now to fix this society and to create more tribal and intellectual unity.

Anthony Scaramucci:

So we can disagree and we can disagree, forcefully and vigorously. But if we become overly disagreeable with each other, David, we end up in a situation where we are in a quagmire together. And I want to go to the Americans of the past, who, whatever their differences were when there was a crisis they fortified and unified and made things happen. Charles Vanderburgh, as an example, he didn't agree with a lot of the things that Truman was doing. He was a Republican from Ohio but he recognized the scourge of communism, he recognized the expansion of communism left unchecked. And so he teamed up with Truman. Now they didn't have to agree on everything, but they got a lot of things right. And the post-World War II architecture led to a very prosperous America and a very aspirational blue collar America, which I lived in, so I want to get back there. But the vaccinations to me, are in that spirit of an age old America, where Jonas Salk invents the polio vaccine, is it perfect? It is not.

Anthony Scaramucci:

The smallpox vaccination, I know you're familiar with the 1905 Jacobson versus Massachusetts case, where the Supreme court rules that Massachusetts can mandate the smallpox vaccine in light of the pandemic and the healthcare situation. Now you fast forward into the United States where we are today. And in my opinion, we are victims of all this great science, we're victims of all this great success of these vaccines, and frankly, the success of our political system and our freedoms, and now we're perverting those. Moreover, at the same time that we're doing that, we have a group of foreign adversaries, specifically the Russians and the GRU and the KGB, that have created robotic technology in our social media space, have invented identities, they look like Americans, they sound like Americans. They're based in parts of the country, but they're actually at server farms in Moscow, instigating broad-based division in the society and in the culture to split the society and to weaken the society.

Anthony Scaramucci:

And good leadership requires at this moment in our history to explain that the American people and explain the need to have a vaccine mandate. And why that vaccine mandate is important, not only for themselves and their families, our public health system and our commerce. You are more free being vaccinated than you are not being vaccinated. Okay. You go ahead.

David Bahnsen:

Well, so far, there's not much I agree other than just the addition of the concept of a mandate where to the extent that there are foreign adversaries that spread disinformation, I think there are two villains in that. The foreign adversaries who spread disinformation and the platforms that allow it, that have every capability in the world of stopping it. At some point... we'll get to a point, and this is like a whole nother podcast and probably a whole 'nother series of podcasts. I already had Senator Mike Lee on Capital Record to talk about some of the debates amongst big tech. There is no reason we can't get to them. What if Citibank or JP Morgan allowed me to have a credit card for me, and then I created 15 fake aliases to also have a credit card. It's ridiculous, it can't happen.

David Bahnsen:

So the fact that there are so many fake users on various social media platforms is why a fake disinformation campaign from a foreign adversary is allowed to happen. It could be stopped in a second if Silicon valley wanted it to. But my point is, that you and I share this much in common. I'm not here to debate you on the efficacy of vaccines. I'm also not here to debate about the merits to the society if more are vaccinated. And in fact, I am here to debate what is the most effective way to get more people vaccinated? The issue at play is merely a disagreement over tactic. Is federal mandating a way to go? You smallpox and polio analogy. Polio was not federally mandated, children were forced to be. You had a 32% mortality rate. We have a 0.2% mortality rate.

David Bahnsen:

It's a lot of people. It's a tiny fraction of how many people die in car accidents. It's a tiny fraction of how many people die of drug abuse, of heart disease, of other behavioral conditions, but it's all a tragedy. The targeted amount of deaths I would like to have from a viral disease or other behavioral conditions is zero. But you and I are not utopians. We do not believe zero death is a legitimate policy goal, or even a fair conversation for grown adults, it cannot and will not happen. So we're talking about mitigation. And when we talk about mitigation, we talk about balance. You brought up strong leadership. Leaders don't get to pretend that there's a world without trade-offs. There is a tension between freedom and security.

And though that same tension exists when we talk about things like post-9/11 policy, patriot act, foreign entanglements.

David Bahnsen:

But when we talk about security with COVID, the same is true. So all we're talking about is juxtaposing two principles that are crucial to the founding, and crucial to your and mine's shared worldview. And my view is that a federal mandate of the vaccine that I want to see would hurt the cause of getting more vaccinated, particularly in a time of this level of tribalization, distrust, coming throughout 18 months of massive policy failures and informational failures. The trust level is not such that we can afford a wedge like that, particularly Anthony, as we now know. I know you are not a Trumpian. I am not a Trumpy and I'm a conservative, I'm a Republican, you're probably a bit more moderate centrist, in some issues even leftist than I am. But my point is, both of us are not coming here from a MAGA perspective.

David Bahnsen:

You're not coming from a pure anti-MAGA, and I'm not anywhere near that world. It's just that that's not who we are the unvaccinated problem right now. The problem of unvaccinated is poor and uneducated and minority areas that is... Or already immune. And that makes this entire thing categorically different from polio and smallpox, is that we have a massive amount of natural immunity our policymakers have refused to talk about. So there's a lot I just put out there in sort of a prima facie response, but I just want to make very clear, I share the goal of getting more vaccinated. I simply believe a federal mandate will hurt that objective.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Okay. There's a lot to unpack there. And I probably am leftist on a few issues, which I actually think are libertarian issues, like sex. I don't care what people do in their bedrooms. I don't understand why my conservative friends, they want a smaller government every place, but in my bedroom, they want a larger government. I don't get that, so. I'm probably leftist.

David Bahnsen:

But Anthony that line is adorable and it's cute, and it's been used forever. But abortions don't take place in a bedroom. So pro-life people are not trying to regulate what happens in a bedroom. They can be wrong on the issue, they can be right on the issue, but it's not a fair thing to say about pro-life, they're either right or wrong-

Anthony Scaramucci:

No, I was really more talking about... I wasn't addressing pro-life, I was really talking about same sex relationships. I wasn't really talking about pro-life. Pro-life is a separate issue. I'm obviously a Catholic. And-

David Bahnsen:

Well then your position on it's already known, you're pro-life.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Yeah, I am pro-life, okay.

David Bahnsen:

Okay.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Having said that, my religious beliefs, I don't believe I can impose on others, so we can have that debate too, if you want to have that debate. But I am pro-life because I got raised as a Catholic and I accept the church doctrine as it relates to it. What I tell people is I'm for less abortions. Why can't we use other methods of birth control and do everything we can to eliminate abortion? [crosstalk 00:14:06].

David Bahnsen:

Well, Anthony, your church has spoken on that too my friend.

Anthony Scaramucci:

What's that?

David Bahnsen:

Your church has spoken on that issue as well.

Anthony Scaramucci:

No, I understand that. Listen-

David Bahnsen:

I get to be smart-alecky here because I'm a Protestant, but either way we don't have to go down the path. I'm generally [crosstalk 00:14:20].

Anthony Scaramucci:

Let stick on the vaccine for a second, okay? Let's say that you and I are in the white house situation room, which is an interesting place. I've been in the white house situation room. But we're sitting there and now we've got some big decisions to make. And I sat down with you and I said, "Okay, here are the R-naughts, here are the exponential affects of these viruses." And so the Delta variant has an eight. The original variant started at a two, we got it down to below one. Now what is an R-naught? Just for everybody listening. It is, I'm sick, how many people am I going to affect on that day, infect with my illness. And so if you're below one, you can get the thing contained, the shedding stops and you get to herd immunity. If you're above one, you are going to exponentially create a pandemic.

Anthony Scaramucci:

So the Delta Variant's at an eight and the original COVID-19, SARS-2 was that a two, we got it down to a 0.9. We're in the white house situation room. I tell you, "Here are the facts. If we do the following mitigation steps, we're going to reduce the deaths. We know the issue in the trade-offs of freedom, but we're going to lose a half a million people if we mishandle this. If we really mishandle it, we're going to lose 750,000 people." Now I think that's a war. Now we can disagree, but I think that's a war. If I'm sitting in the white house situation room, and I'm talking about a casualty count from an invisible enemy. And I look at the casualties of World War I, casualties of World War II, the Korean war, the two Iraq wars and the Afghanistan war, I'm saying, "Okay, this is actually we're at war, and a result of which, what are we going to do to protect the American people as it relates to our leadership?"

Anthony Scaramucci:

Now, sometimes when you're making those decisions, you chip away at certain things. We both have a first amendment right, but we don't have a first amendment right to do certain things that could potentially harm other people. You have the right to move your arm, I can move my arm, but I can't clench my fist and move my arm into your face. That's not part of my freedom, because it's now in a situation where it can harm others. And so last point, you've got a million hospital beds in the United States and you and I both know that our census is probably wrong, we probably have 345 million people. Because we do have a lot of untracked immigration into the country, illegal immigration. And it's probably close to 345 million people.

Anthony Scaramucci:

We have 1 million hospital beds. And you got healthcare workers, many of which are in my family, you're going to stress them out of their minds. And then we can have the debate over the efficacy and the safety of the vaccines. The FDA has just ruled at least one of those MRNA vaccines is safe. And I think to me [crosstalk 00:17:22].

David Bahnsen:

... they were all safe, they just hadn't giving anything beyond emergency use authorization. [crosstalk 00:17:28].

Anthony Scaramucci:

Right. Okay. But I'm saying that you're getting an extra layer of authorization bureaucratically, which may provide comfort to some people. But I think you and I, are going to stipulate that we both think that the vaccine is safe. Not saying-

David Bahnsen:

All three of the US vaccines are safe.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Okay. Yeah. We're going to agree on that. So therefore, like we had a draft mandate, which is a certain abrogation of freedom. We instituted a draft, if you were above the age of 18 and a male, you went to selective service, you got drafted. If you didn't want to go to the war, you want to jail. And that's an abrogation of freedom, but you were at a higher cause fighting for the in general freedom. Make one last point. Once in a while, we have to conjoin ourselves, and we have to band together and subordinate ourselves to the greater good of our health and safety, and our social contract. And your freedom, David and my freedom and the free market, by the way, the commercial capitalism in our country is actually tied together. It's a weird thing.

Anthony Scaramucci:

We are always operating in a collective capitalist environment. Because you know you got an amazing business and I know your teammates well, there's no David Bahnsen without the team behind David Bahnsen. There's no SkyBridge without the team. There's no Meth, Yankee pick it. Every organization has to succumb to some level of collectivity in order for them to grow and nourish their capitalism. And I'm saying [crosstalk 00:19:03].

David Bahnsen:

And so in our country-

Anthony Scaramucci:

I'm saying this in a meta way, we have to do that on a meta way societally. And we need good leadership to explain that to the American people.

David Bahnsen:

Okay. So I don't want to say this for click bait, shock jock or unfair inflammatory sensationalism, but I'm just starting at the extreme level of what people can mean by that, that greater collective good as part of our national identity. Taken to its extreme, you would agree that there was a [Resoian 00:19:30] context there that was very fascist. That was very nationalistic, it was [Hedmurray 00:19:36], it was Mussolini, it was at an extreme level, which you're not advocating, and obviously I'm not advocating. One can take it to those degrees. And then there is a kind of American ethos that also calls for greater community good, being part of the national politic, being part of the fabric of the country. And I would argue that the key distinction is not just a difference of degree, but a difference of kind. That in our version of the community responsibility that you describe, back to your Catholic faith, we have something that is like a subsidiarity.

David Bahnsen:

It is local. Washington DC in our country has never been the ideal for top-down implementation of community living, of local bonding together to care for one another. That is best done in our country's tradition and in our country's ideals, at a local level, community level. Which is the idea of federalism when it's politicized, and it's the idea of subsidiarity when it is applied in a different context. My view here is that the idea of a mandate for the feds to get to where you want to go, destroys a limiting principle. I believe that there is a limiting principle to my freedom. Your analogy with the fist and the hand, and we can move our arm around, but we can't hit someone in the face. There's a limiting principle to what we can do with our arm.

David Bahnsen:

This is so much of what it means to be a conservative, is the belief and limiting principles. We have so many more dying, 1.35 million people a year globally, dying of car accidents. And there is ample reason to suggest we need to just knock it off with this thing called cars and quit driving. And I'm in the white house situation room and I say, "This has become massive. There's too many people dying. We've tried now for a hundred years to stop it. We've mitigated. We've done seatbelts, we've done airbags and we've done better road safety, but gosh, darn it, people were still dying. And if I'm going to be a wartime president, I have got to eliminate automobiles."

Anthony Scaramucci:

It's a little different though, because-

David Bahnsen:

It is a lot different.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Oh, it is because the automobile incidents and casualties are discreet. And in a pandemic, the potentiality for death is exponential.

David Bahnsen:

I wouldn't have agreed with this a year ago either. But what we have right now is an explosion of cases, that the proportionality of deaths to cases in the winter of this year and in summer of last year, was eight times more than the proportionality of deaths to cases going back one week, two weeks, three weeks, five weeks, seven weeks, nine weeks. So we do not have the same fatality risk because most of the people that are getting this technical positivity right now are younger and healthier. And they're is such a high degree of vaccine penetration, that we've had a lot of mitigation. But even to your point of spread, what we have is urgency, is your argument. And I'm simply saying on that line, we have urgency with heart disease, but we do not ban French fries. We have urgency with alcohol abuse, we tried prohibition, it didn't go very well. So I just, am not clear.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Okay. So this is the debate because those are different. They are different because if I create heart disease in myself, I don't have the ability to shed the heart disease on to somebody else.

David Bahnsen:

Oh no, Anthony, you don't have the ability to shed COVID to somebody else who's vaccinated. There's no difference.

Anthony Scaramucci:

It's the-

David Bahnsen:

The vaccinated or not at risk from the unvaccinated.

Anthony Scaramucci:

It's the unvaccinated, are at risk to the unvaccinated, David.

David Bahnsen:

Oh, my point is then they are each... There's three people unvax A, unvax B and vax C. So you agree, you and I are vax C, we're out, we're good.

Anthony Scaramucci:

I totally agree.

David Bahnsen:

Unvax A and unvax B are not at risk because of each other. There are at risks because of what they've done, which is choose not to get vaccinated. Their risk is not from unvax A, unvax B is only at risk because unvax B chose not to be vaccinated. [crosstalk 00:24:07].

Anthony Scaramucci:

... people in the society like my seven and four year old, that can't get vaccinated. And so they're now putting people at risk that cannot get-

David Bahnsen:

Your seven year old and a four year old, have a lower chance of dying from COVID than getting killed by lightning bolt.

Anthony Scaramucci:

You don't know that David. Come on, there are seven and four year olds and three year olds that are on a respirator.

David Bahnsen:

You can't change the federal constitution because you don't know that. What we know-

Anthony Scaramucci:

Come on David.

David Bahnsen:

We know there's 320 deaths.

Anthony Scaramucci:

You just told me that an unvaccinated person can infect an unvaccinated person. My seven and four year old or unvaccinated not because... If I could get them vaccinated, I would get them vaccinated. So now they're at risk because of the-

David Bahnsen:

But they're not at risk of COVID though.

Anthony Scaramucci:

They are David, of course they are.

David Bahnsen:

... of course. We know that they're... What do you mean, they're at risk of COVID? Of dying of COVID?

Anthony Scaramucci:

They have a potentiality to die-

David Bahnsen:

They have a potentiality of dying walking on the street, that is higher, of being on a freeway that is higher.

Anthony Scaramucci:

David.

David Bahnsen:

Now that's just a statistical fact.

Anthony Scaramucci:

But we're now-

David Bahnsen:

Look into the data of how many people are under 18.

Anthony Scaramucci:

We're now too deep into a rabbit hole. You have a pandemic going on. You've already had 600,000 people die in the United States related to the pandemic.

David Bahnsen:

Yep.

Anthony Scaramucci:

We're losing 1,000 people a day-

David Bahnsen:

Well, it's 420 people over the last seven days now, but it got up to a thousand for one week with Delta, that is true.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Yeah. Okay. So we want to average it out-

David Bahnsen:

And it's now substantially come down

Anthony Scaramucci:

... let's say it's 500 a day. So 500 a day. We're going to lose another 150 to 170,000 people, because it variates, it fluctuates. Why you and I both know that a vaccine will get us to herd immunity, will stop the virus shedding, and you and I both know that also [crosstalk 00:25:58].

David Bahnsen:

But the vaccines are available now. These solutions are available now.

Anthony Scaramucci:

You and I both know that that will improve the economy, that will open up the economy-

David Bahnsen:

Of course, it would.

Anthony Scaramucci:

... and create freedom for our society.

David Bahnsen:

What's the leap you're taking though?

Anthony Scaramucci:

If you're making a freedom argument, the most free we can be as a society is if we vaccinate. That's the most free we can be.

David Bahnsen:

Okay. But it's begging the question though. The most free we can be as if we freely vaccinate. To force the decision, how many people that are unvaccinated have antibodies? You don't know. What's your guess?

Anthony Scaramucci:

I don't know the answer to that. I'm not going to-

David Bahnsen:

Okay. But do you acknowledge in a common sense perspective, that it's millions of people?

Anthony Scaramucci:

Yeah. You see, this is where we're both getting stuck. I'm not-

David Bahnsen:

No, but would you... I'm not making a complaint but I'm asking the question.

Anthony Scaramucci:

This is where we're both getting stuck. Because you see you're a way more normative person than me. And you have tremendous idealism in your personality, and I understand where you're going with your concept of freedom. But I'm actually looking at the reality and the totality of the situation. And what I'm saying, is real leadership, once in a while, requires that a leader does the cost benefit analysis and makes a tough decision on behalf of population. As an example, if you and I were alive in 1861, when Abraham Lincoln took parts of the constitution and demolished them, including the writ of habeas corpus. And now we could debate whether the Southern states had the right to succeed. Pauline Maier, who's now deceased, a leading constitutional historian, wrote several great books, but one of them was on the constitutional convention. In order to get the Southern states to ratify the constitution, they had the right to succeed. So when they executed the right to succeed, it was within their constitutional rights.

David Bahnsen:

Well, first of all, that is completely untrue, that they had the constitutional right. It's a subject of unbelievable controversy. It can't just be stated as fact. There is no enumerated power to succession the states in the constitution. But either way, I'm willing to accept-

Anthony Scaramucci:

It wasn't settled until 1869 with Brown versus Texas.

David Bahnsen:

But no. My point is that Lincoln took extraordinary steps. And you're saying that that was what a great leader in the midst of a war time did. And now rhetorically, I think it sounds great to say, a strong wartime president because COVID is a big deal is going to take you extreme steps. So we're on..

Anthony Scaramucci:

I don't think it's that extreme of a step though. So our children have vaccine mandates. They can't get-

David Bahnsen:

But it is. I'm asking you a question.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Polio, smallpox, measles, my kids have it. Excuse me, are your kids vaccinated? No-

David Bahnsen:

Of course, on all of them.

Anthony Scaramucci:

... they can't go to the school.

David Bahnsen:

On all of them. But first of all, they don't have to go to the school. Second of all, there is a fatality rate that is so categorically different. It basically the lack of limiting principle, could lead to an unbelievable slippery slope of where we go with this by medicalizing such a way of thinking. But I want to go back to what I said about natural immunity, because this is not about me being normative. I always think it's a little unfair. I think it's effective in argument like rhetorically, by how one person's being normative and the other person's being a realist. No, I'm being a realist about the state of the country's division and the distrust that exists on the ground of people with their government. A distrust that's mostly been earned.

David Bahnsen:

I want people to be vaccinated, like guys like you and I, who people look up to and we have a little bit of credibility and we have a microphone, convincing people, persuading people. And to the extent at the end of the day, we can't get 100% of them vaccinated, they are taking risks only with themselves. You point out, "Well, no, there's still risk for a four year old and seven year old." My point is, that's certainly not a fatality risk, and you know it. The fatality risks of a four year old and a seven year old is zero. So we don't have a risk in our country with COVID, a fatality, which is the war time picture you're painting. Let me just finish this thought.

Anthony Scaramucci:

We both don't know the long-term effects of COVID...

David Bahnsen:

Okay. But Anthony, that's a different argument. You can't now set policy on things we don't know in the future. We can only set it on what we do know. And my point is that I want more people to be vaccinated. And once we say the government's making you do it, well, less people are going to do it. And I think that you and I have other arenas that we can spread this message. Once you go to Washington DC is making you, you lose community buy-in, it's top down, it's not bottom up. It isn't being done out of that sense that you're describing, the real American ethos.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Your point about the distrust in the government, and your point about the distrust in the establishment is well founded. And I have said that repeatedly, I've said that on the public airwaves, that... And the neighborhood I grew up in where my cousins are clamming and they're in the auto glass business, or they're cutting baloney, my cousins have a very steep and very deep distrust in the establishment, medical, political, and otherwise.

David Bahnsen:

And it's not based on them wearing a red hat. It's not-

Anthony Scaramucci:

100%. And I'm going to cede the point to you that it has been well earned, that we have faltered over the last 25 years. Where in 1970, perhaps there was more trust or even going back further prior to the Vietnam war, even more trusts coming out of the second world war.

David Bahnsen:

Yeah.

Anthony Scaramucci:

But, so that's your reality and perhaps I'm being more normative about where the state of the society is. So let me ask you this question. If the society had more trust in the government, and let's say it was 1953, 1955, when trust levels in the establishment were at all-time highs, would that make you change your mind about a mandate?

David Bahnsen:

No, I don't think that you can have a mandate on a 0.2% fatality, when right now the immunity rate is somewhere according to Fauci, over 70%, according to other scientists at Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Stanford, over 80%. I don't think that you have the compelling case for federal mandate. The 30%... See, this is why I'm surprised your side brings up smallpox, because it really does open the door for my side to say, "Anthony it's 0.2% versus 30%." And that's not being fancy with numbers. That's such a substantial difference-

Anthony Scaramucci:

Okay. Well hold on a second. So if the number was that high, you would be for the mandate?

David Bahnsen:

If we had a 30% fatality rate with a particular disease, then I think that it would be a much more compelling argument. Now then I'd have to look at what the pre-infection rates are and other such distinctives. With smallpox, of course, most of the people had died. Because it's such an unbelievably small fatality rate with COVID-19, we... and this is the part I wanted you to answer because I'm really curious what you think. We're not going to say her name on the podcast, but I had a fight, not a fight, I had a conversation with someone at the steak house that you own in New York city last week, who was upset about having to be vaccinated when she had already had COVID. And she's someone who's kind of on your side politically, a reasonable grownup, successful professional. And that's the thing I'm hearing all over now, it's not MAGA people. And I guess it's a sad reality for me, but I don't actually have street level conversations with the poor more rural people.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Why is that person upset? There's no mandate at this point, they don't have to...

David Bahnsen:

Oh, no. She still had to do it to get into a restaurant, like your restaurant.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Oh. To get in a restaurant. Well that different. Well then, isn't that the free enterprise system you want?

David Bahnsen:

It is. No, she was only talking about the theoretical possibility of a federal vaccine..

Anthony Scaramucci:

Well I understand that. But in a free enterprise system...

David Bahnsen:

The restaurants have...

Anthony Scaramucci:

... if I own a restaurant, do I have a right to impose a vaccine mandate?

David Bahnsen:

So hear me out so you can appreciate how normative I am, how consistently conservative I am. I'm critical of Governor DeSantis telling businesses, they can't mandate it. I'm hyper defensive of him prohibiting the requirement of the mandate, but then I think he went too far by actually saying a business couldn't mandate it. And so I'm trying to be right in the lane. It's not libertarian, it's a classical liberal position that we don't have the situation that requires it, and where we have anecdotal support for building immunity-

Anthony Scaramucci:

So you agree then

David Bahnsen:

... to account for what we're going to do with the 20 to 30 million people that already have immunity. And by the way, have more antidotes than the vaccinated.

Anthony Scaramucci:

So you agree that Norwegian cruise lines, their own business. They move into a port-

David Bahnsen:

They have a right to mandate the vaccine.

Anthony Scaramucci:

And no problem. And if you don't want to go on their ship, then it's no problem.

David Bahnsen:

Yes.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Okay. All right. So we're really not that far apart, David. I guess the concern that I have, is the... and the statistical numbers, 0.2% sounds low. But the absolute number where I think we're going to end up 750 to a million people, and you're saying, "Well, that's just like-"

David Bahnsen:

We're not going to get to a million my friend, we're not going to get to a million.

Anthony Scaramucci:

But I think we get to 750.

David Bahnsen:

By the way, this is a rabbit hole too.

Anthony Scaramucci:

You're at 620 . Now you don't think another 130,000 people are going to die from this?

David Bahnsen:

The 620 is with COVID not from COVID. The CDC has the asterix and footnotes all over their website. They audited the numbers in San Jose. They audited it in counties in Wisconsin, ended up determining somewhere between 30 and 50% did not die from COVID, but it says COVID on their death certificate because they had COVID when they died.

David Bahnsen:

We're never going to know though. I'm not a conspiracy guy, and I'm just saying it's not that high.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Listen, there are people that got COVID. They recover from COVID and then they died from an associated blood clot related to COVID. They're not listed as COVID deaths, they're listed as dying from

heart attacks or blood clots, I understand that. I'm just saying to you that... and perhaps this is where we should both ended up is that, we have to figure out a way to restore trust in our society that we have let down a very large group of people, David. The people I grew up with were aspirational... This was our conversation the first time that we got together on your podcasts, are now economically desperational and they are pissed off. And they want to put a finger in your eye and my eye on wall street. They want to put a finger in the eye of the people in Washington, and anybody that they see that has taken too much cake from the system and hasn't shared enough cake with them.

Anthony Scaramucci:

And I'm not talking about sharing it with them socially, through socialism. I'm talking about the opportunity set of good education. We can agree or disagree on this, but I'm all about on equal outcomes. But our society is rich enough where we have to create a platform of equal opportunity.

David Bahnsen:

So can I reinforce what you're saying and apply it to the COVID moment?

Anthony Scaramucci:

Please.

David Bahnsen:

You are right. The way I dress and the income and life I have, a lot of those people would not like me, but they should because I'll fight to my dying \$%^&* day for those people. Everything I care about for the aspirational society, is for people to be able to do the things with their life that you did with yours and I did with mine. So through the COVID moment, I'm this wall street guy with money that was fighting tooth and nail to get their coffee shops open, their deli's open, to allow some ability for economic living and activity. What did the left wing people who say they care about those people do? They were on their Zoom calls, riding their pelotons, not leaving their houses. And more or less totally okay with staying in the house as long as it needs be.

David Bahnsen:

So my view on these things is for that guy, that girl, that aspirational need in these communities, that is what drives me here. And when you say we have a responsibility to rebuild trust, I agree 100%. I can't stand the media business model that each side is trying to provoke outrage in their own respective basis. They're never trying to speak to their audience, they're trying to speak for their audience, I can't stand it. We can't help the trust problem by federal mandating of vaccines right now. And we can't help the trust problem by continuing to ignore natural immunity. We have to have honest conversations. I don't blame any of the science, public health guys whatever, for being wrong on things. I'm not looking for, gotcha moments. I didn't even really blame Trump for being wrong on this stuff. It's like at the end of the day, it's difficult to have to do what they're doing, there's a lot of stuff we don't know.

David Bahnsen:

Fauci got some things wrong, he got some things right, I'm not looking to pile on anybody. But we can't go out and do things that we know are going to make the matter worse with public trust, when we have strategies that can help. First of all, why the hell did it take the FDA this long for full approval of the Pfizer vaccine, we already have had 130 million get the vaccine. There was no reason to not say, "Okay, it has full approval." And so things like that bureaucracy lead to the distrust. Ignoring natural immunity

leads to the distrust. Making a kid mask up and going outdoors to the playground, leads to the distress. There's things we can do to rebuild the fabric of society that helps the people you and I both talk about and care about.

Anthony Scaramucci:

And I agree with all that, so I have nothing to add, but I want to ask you an additional question. Okay. If you had a friend that was unvaccinated, what would you say to that friend to encourage them to be vaccinated?

David Bahnsen:

Well, if they lived in New York, I would say, "You're not going to be able to get into a restaurant if you don't get vaccinated." But no, if they had had COVID before, I would have a difficult time trying to press the issue, because scientifically they have antibodies and it's a tough thing to argue with. I would maybe point out that we don't know how long the antibodies will last, and why not just get it done so you have it in the future. But for a vulnerable person to their knowledge, hasn't had COVID before and we see all of it, I would point out that there's an infection risk to others, and there is their own health and wellbeing. And if they're in an adult range of need, I would just say, like any other health measure, why not go forward and do it, take care of yourself and at the same time, do some good for the society.

Anthony Scaramucci:

You just don't want that mandated?

David Bahnsen:

Not federally mandated. I think Norwegian cruise lines can have their mandates, I think employers can have their mandates. Now, of course, then the thing ends. You can say at SkyBridge, you have to mandate. I didn't mandate at the Bahnsen Group, but at SkyBridge, someone can quit if they don't want to do it and come work for Bahnsen Group. There's different [crosstalk 00:42:00] freedoms.

Anthony Scaramucci:

I made the decision to mandate it because I'm looking at it as a leader, and I'm looking at the totality of the safety of the vaccines. And I'm looking at the health of my employees and their family members, and my elderly parents and other employees elderly parents. And I said, "We're going with the vaccine mandate. You don't want to work at SkyBridge, absolutely no problem. We'll help you find another job. Go look somewhere else." And by the way, it's the same thing with our conference. Allen & Company, fully vaccinated. Mike Milkens coming to the Hamptons this weekend, you got to be fully vaccinated.

David Bahnsen:

I did the SALT thing on Clear yesterday, where... can you see it?

Anthony Scaramucci:

Yeah, I can see it. Yeah that's....

David Bahnsen:

Yeah, I got... You scan in your vax card and Clear runs a QR thing and all that.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Because I now know, if you're coming into the conference and some of it is indoors and some of it is outdoors, your vaccination will protect you and it will protect the other people in the room. And so all I'm saying to you intellectually, is there are points of time where the individual freedom and the freedom of the entire society, they rub against each other. You're suggesting they may be rubbing right now, but they're not on a collision course, so you're okay with it. I'm suggesting, they're more on a collision course. And by the way, I can tell you why we are basically in agreement, David, because when you increase the mortality to 32%, you more carefully considered my argument about a mandate. At 0.2%. You're saying, "No, we're rubbing, we're not colliding." I'm looking at the absolute number, the 650,000, and I'm saying please just.

David Bahnsen:

But you're not really because you would not ban French fries tomorrow. And obesity is a far bigger killer than COVID. [crosstalk 00:44:04] And by the way, Anthony, obesity was the number one co-morbidity with COVID, it's only because of this politically correct nonsense we live in that we're not allowed to talk about obesity for what it really is. We have to-

Anthony Scaramucci:

Look, I hate the political correct wokeness as much as you do, but what about seatbelts? You said 1.5 million-

David Bahnsen:

The seatbelt issue never needed to be done federally, it could always have been done locally. So this is not a normative thing. It's about the system that we chose to live in.

Anthony Scaramucci:

You're okay with the seatbelts or you're not okay?

David Bahnsen:

I believe that two things are true at once. The seatbelt always should have been done at a local level, and at a federal level, those things have been effective. But we have to look to not just the security, but the freedom. This is as old as Ben Franklin's famous line.

Anthony Scaramucci:

And I know the line well, but here's the point. You just [inaudible 00:45:02] one and a half million people are dying from the car accidents, less are dying as a result of the seatbelts being put on, we know that, that's factually correct. And so there's some rub between freedom and the overall society, the pressure on the health care system.

David Bahnsen:

But not all things the federal... In federal government... see, this is the non-sequitur of it. Alcohol is a killer, alcohol abuse is a killer, it's not just a mortality contributor. It kills families, it kills jobs, it kills economic success, it kills the soul. Prohibition was a dastardly federal failure. So it's a non-sequitur to say that whenever there's a big problem, we need a federal solution that is mandated.

Anthony Scaramucci:

I accept that. But I think what's ironic about this entire conversation is we're actually way closer than people would actually think, because we're both concerned about the Liberty. Believe me, I don't want to federally impose anything unless it's in an extremist situation where it's going to make the society freer and more generally protective. And I understand the nuanced David, between individual freedom and the committee that we need together to stay free. Once in a while we got to join forces to fight evil, frankly, to keep ourselves free. And with that comes all of those convoluted choices.

Anthony Scaramucci:

Last point on that topic is I know for certain, and I can share with you and your listeners for certain, and I can recommend books to read, and you can talk to people in our national security complex, who are apolitical guys like General McMaster, for certain that the former Soviet union, the people that are now running Russia are... and I'll use the quote from president Putin himself. "The worst thing that happened in the 20th century was the demolition of the Soviet union." Not World War I, not World War II, but the demolition of the Soviet union. And he blames the west.

Anthony Scaramucci:

And they are using weapons grade propaganda on this nation, France, Germany, the United Kingdom. Sputnik, the state owned news agency just staffed up in Scotland, with the expectation and hope that they can create enough [inaudible 00:47:32] in Scotland, to disassociate the Scots from the United Kingdom. And we have to be more open to an explanatory about that. And you're right about the social media stuff, 1,00% agree with you on that. The economic engine of self-interest of those social media players have allowed for that proliferation. I have a million Twitter followers, God only knows how many Russian bots there are. I have no idea, maybe half of them. I have no idea, but the notion that I have a million Twitter followers makes that more powerful from a projection perspective for the social media enterprises and frankly, people like me, and so they're left alone. And I think it's a mistake. And then you say, "Well, what about the freedom of that corporation to allow for that?" And I would say no to that. Because I would say that it's actually hurting our freedom and it's ruining the unity of the United States.

David Bahnsen:

But again, there's not... In that sense... this isn't a libertarian definition of freedom. Fraud is not freedom. Corruption... There are various elements in commerce and free exchange.

Anthony Scaramucci:

So then we do agree that there are certain lines... I'm the CEO of a social media company, I decided to allow fraud, which I don't view or deemed to be harmful. David can replicate himself 400 times on my social media platform, it's not a credit card. It's a way for him to express himself anonymously.

David Bahnsen:

Replicating myself as different. I'm allowed to have 10 credit cards in my name, it's with fake identities that are allowing for federal [crosstalk 00:49:09]. We already have restrictions against federal

Anthony Scaramucci:

... the CEO of that social media. But David, it's just anonymous expression of free speech. That's what it is.

David Bahnsen:

All I'm saying is that, I don't want to engage the conversation by pretending there's not trade-offs. I have a book coming out called There's no Free Lunch. In in this case, we can find the right policy juxtaposition our freedom and security. We can't do it by pretending that everybody can win. That you're going to get your spinach and it's all going to taste like dessert.

Anthony Scaramucci:

I have an enormous amount of respect for you intellectually, you have moved me. I'm man enough to admit when I moved in a conversation, I don't have to be that, it's my way or the highway sort of a guy. You have moved me. But therefore, if it's not federally mandated you and I and people like you and I, we need to figure out a way to impress and influence as many people as possible to get the safe vaccinated, we just need to do it.

David Bahnsen:

I agree.

Anthony Scaramucci:

And I'm doing everything in my power to do that. Perhaps I'm overreaching with the federal mandate. I accept your position that there's not enough trust in the system. But it's interesting that you can't be that far away from me, because on smallpox with a 30% mortality, you're like, "Okay, that could be extremest enough of a situation where we have to do things like that."

David Bahnsen:

Even then though, I think it's entirely possible. From a 10th amendment standpoint, it could have been done at the state level, there's other nuances. But my point is, it's an extreme case that would have required extreme policy response. And there's not an absolute-ism that says, "People should be free to go out and kill tons of other people. The infectiousness there and the fatality reached a certain bar." In this case, it works as a counterargument on COVID because the mortality is so small. But Anthony, I think you said it earlier when you asked me, "What would you do if you had a friend?" The number one thing that's going to get someone to go get vaccinated is their friend, their family member, their spouse, their brother, their sister. That's subsidiarity. That's the Catholic doctrine of people... See, the government can't love you.

Anthony Scaramucci:

I understand.

David Bahnsen:

Your friend can, and we can do it locally. And then one step up from that, that doesn't get anywhere near Washington DC, but it's just SkyBridge, it's SALT, it's Bahnsen Group, it's conversation, it's media appearances. So we have so many vehicles that I don't just think are adequate, I think they're far superior to federal mandate. And then we leave more social fabric together, there's still more cohesion to build off of. And ultimately we will get that immunity throughout the society that we need, without then having contributed to the trust problem you and I both care about.

Anthony Scaramucci:

I agree. And I want to make one last point because I think it's an important one. Because when you're talking about the individual, I don't want the individual to make their decision not to be vaccinated based on fraud. As an example, is there a microchip in the vaccine? There is no microchip in the vaccine is. Are there MRNA in there that's destroying or affecting your genetic code? There's no scientific evidence of that.

David Bahnsen:

Okay. But let's do this, for both of our sake. Bill Gates, microchip, global conspiracy, all of this stuff, nonsense. And as a person prone to believe it, going to be persuaded by a federal vaccine, are they going to cooperate with the federal vaccine?

Anthony Scaramucci:

No, you're right about that. They will double down on the...

David Bahnsen:

Double down, triple down, grab a gun. God knows what they're going to do.

Anthony Scaramucci:

So I'm going to leave you with this thought, because again, I love the country, I love the American experience and the American experiment, and I want to make it better for everybody as you know. And particularly because of my upbringing, I have a lot of empathy for people that were situated the way I was 35 short years ago. We got to make it better, brother. We have to break it down and we have to communicate more, and so I'm very grateful for being included today.

David Bahnsen:

I appreciate every thing. I love that we're able to work through it together as friends, points of agreement, some points of disagreement, but honestly I've appreciated the time I hope listeners have as well. I also hope that you will come to the SALT conference at the Javits Center in New York city, September 13th, through 15th. Coming back to the world's greatest city in person, some incredible speakers...

Anthony Scaramucci:

And the Chainsmokers.

David Bahnsen:

Yes. And that does not refer to people that are going out and damaging their lungs constitutionally, it refers to the great band, the Chainsmokers. So are, they're playing, I think on the second night?

Anthony Scaramucci:

Second night, it will be Tuesday night.

David Bahnsen:

Now you've had some great groups over the years at SALT. Look, there's so much fun that is going to be had at the conference, check it out. I'm sure we'll have Anthony back on Capital Record. Thanks again, appreciate it my friend.

Anthony Scaramucci:

All the best, David. Thank you.