

Episode 109 - BWS Roundtable: Talkin' shots— the debate over the COVID vaccine.

Bill Walton: [00:08](#) Welcome to the Bill Walton show with everything coming down from the pandemic and the lockdowns. And now the vaccines. I wanted to talk with some fairly savvy observers about their take on what's happening and what we can expect going forward. And so I asked three members of my team on the Bill Walton show, Rich McFadden and Greg Corombos of radio America and Brian McNicoll, who's an independent journalist, as I mentioned, savvy observers all. Greg, why don't we start off with you, what's your take on? Let's start with the vaccines.

Greg Corombos: [00:45](#) Well, the thing I've been saying in a number of different forums over the last few weeks is if you liked the mask wars, you're going to love the vaccine wars because of course the idea has been that you have to wear the mask, you have to social distance, and they might be good recommendations, but obviously you're looked upon and scorned by certain people if you don't and in certain settings. And when we get to the point where vaccines are widely available, we're already seeing signs that if you don't get the vaccine, you're going to be shunned from polite society. Now, most of it's coming from the private sector at this point Ticketmaster says, you need to have proof of vaccination or proof of a negative COVID test within the past 72 hours to go to one of their concerts when they reopened their concerts, which they hope to do next year, Qantas airlines has said, you need to have proof of vaccination if you're doing any international travel on their airline.

CNBC, just put out an article this week saying, "Yes, your employer has the right to fire you, if you refuse." And this isn't to say, be scared of the vaccine. I'm very pro-vaccine. I might be, given the speed of this a little bit later in line to get it, just to see how other folks react to it. But there, I think on a personal Liberty level, there's a big difference between encouraging people to get the vaccine and saying the sooner everybody gets a vaccine, I think things are going to go back to as close as they can to normal and saying, you must get the vaccine or else you're not going to have access to different parts of everyday society. I think that's going to engender a lot more backlash than cooperation. And it seems like some people who are on the vaccination express train here are almost excited to see that clash. And I think that's very unfortunate.

Bill Walton: [02:35](#) Well, and the science of Ticketmaster science is right in line with everything we've seen for the last nine months, which is, I

mean, who goes to rock concerts, kids who are the least likely statistically to get anything remotely, like COVID-19 the 0.001 level. And yet they're going to be the one showing the vaccination papers. So this looks like a continuation of the same old, same old Rich, Brian. So.

Rich McFadden: [03:07](#)

Bill you're a business guy. So I would love to hear your take on what you think is going to happen when Qantas and Ticketmaster and all of these companies are not able to make a profit because they've shunned a large portion or a good sized portion of their customer base. Then what happens do they go to the government and ask for help? And then what does the government do? So then do we end up as taxpayers subsidizing these companies who won't serve us because we will not get the vaccination at the speed at which they would like us to what happens to business at that point?

Bill Walton: [03:46](#)

Well, the short answer is yes, we're going to see them going to government. They're going to go to government for two different reasons. One is they're going to lobby for the mandatory vaccine. So these CEOs don't want to go out on point. So they're going to try to hide behind the government mandate. And so like all the rest of the things we've seen, we're going to be seeing very big business lobbying government to lock people down or in this case, take a vaccine and failing that. Yeah, there'll be back with their hands out for more bailouts. It's not a good scenario. And as you can sense, I've got a lot of respect for the small working entrepreneurs, but not a lot for the way big businesses handle this.

Rich McFadden: [04:24](#)

And we're seeing right now, I'm sorry, Brian, we're seeing right now, how businesses are fighting back, small businesses, especially, you see the restaurant owner in Los Angeles who is saying, listen, they're able to film a movie and feed people 50 feet away from my closed restaurant. I don't think this is going to end well if they decide to make the vaccine mandatory for everyone. So I just, I don't see this going in the right direction for America.

Bill Walton: [04:56](#)

Brian.

Brian McNicoll: [04:57](#)

I think you're headed for some serious civil unrest if you do stuff like that. Because the people who are coming into power now, Biden manages to hold on they live to compel people to do stuff. So it's not going to be long before this moves from a private industry mandate to a government mandate and quite possibly given the folks that he's appointing and so forth at the federal level. I mean he's talking about Xavier Becerra being

head of HHS, that's... I don't see this sticking to being a vocal thing.

Bill Walton: [05:35](#)

Who's he? Whose Xavier... who's he?

Brian McNicoll: [05:37](#)

He is attorney general of California now. He is the most pro-abortion politician in America.

Bill Walton: [05:43](#)

Oh my, well but the thing that's different about this say as opposed to the mask is this seems to be a bipartisan opposition to vaccine, both sides of the aisle have started saying, we don't want to play in the sandbox. What do you... how do you guys seeing that playing out?

Greg Corombos: [05:59](#)

Well, I think it's an important distinction to make between discouraging people, to get the vaccine and forcing people to get the vaccine. I think it's fine to encourage people to get the vaccine. It's making it mandatory and infringing on that personal Liberty that I think people are going to blanch at. I think people who would normally be inclined to get the vaccine and try to move back to normal, even though there are some signs out there that normal isn't coming, even with the vaccine, for example, you've got epidemiologists telling the New York times, they still think the masks and so forth are going to be required after the vaccines, perhaps in perpetuity, but after all of these mandates on so many different things from small businesses to masks, to everything else. Dropping the hammer instead of using the carrot to encourage people to do this because I mean, the vaccine probably is going to be a good thing.

But people are going to be wary about it because of the speed, even though it's been rigorously tested. And so it's going to be a flash point, particularly among people who might already have reservations about it. So to brow beat them into doing it and to threaten, to cut them off from commerce. I saw one idea. I think it was John Delaney, who was a... and also ran as a democratic presidential candidate, who said that people's individual stimulus check from the next round of COVID relief should be dependent upon getting the vaccine. Well, that is not going to lead to people to get the vaccine that's going to lead to major unrest. And so respecting people's individual rights rather than hitting them over the head with a stick is going to be a much better than...

Rich McFadden: [07:38](#)

A, keep your money. B, It's really my money.

Bill Walton: [07:41](#) Well, yeah. Well, I was John. We're more of a lover of freedom than he is, but he's not. So how does this play into ending the lockdowns? Because I've heard people say, "Well, you're going to have to stay locked down until we get the vaccine." Yet we begin...

Brian McNicoll: [07:57](#) To me that's the way to sell it is to say, "Hey, if you get the... if we all go out and get, this are most of us not mandatory, but if you want it, you go get it. When we achieve X percent vaccine level, we can remove these restrictions." And just tie it directly to the restrictions.

Rich McFadden: [08:17](#) I think the genie's out of the bottle and unfortunately I think that the fear factor out there is so big and people are so afraid of this pandemic that I don't think no matter what you do, they're going to be comfortable with anybody, not wearing masks with anybody, not getting the vaccine. So no matter what percentage of people get the vaccine, no matter what percentage of people don't have the virus anymore, no matter how far the virus drops. I think there's going to be people out there that still say, we need to have masks. We need to be distanced. We need to close businesses where people could be close to each other.

And I think small business is going to get bit. And really what I would love to see is some of these bigger businesses bite themselves in the butt and, and take the bullet for us. Professional sports, Ticketmaster. I could care less if I ever bought another Ticketmaster ticket in my life. I've seen all the journey concerts I need to see I'm done. Go ahead and keep your NBA, woke sports I'm out. So I don't care if Ticketmaster goes out, it just doesn't matter. And I don't think that there's enough people that are going to be able to override the fear factor here.

Bill Walton: [09:38](#) Well, the fear factor is so real. I've got a friend who's a-

Rich McFadden: [09:41](#) It's huge.

Bill Walton: [09:42](#) ...pretty staunch libertarian who keeps sending around all these emails about the masks and the lockdown. We shouldn't be wearing things like that. And I said, well, I hadn't. And so I sent him an email and I said, "Let's get together." And he said, "Oh, I can't do that. Not till we get the vaccine." So you've even got people who are presumably lovers of Liberty who are still terrified of this thing. I mean, I think these scars may last for years.

- Brian McNicoll: [10:08](#) I think there's a very real need to get out the information about this. So for instance where I'm doing, I'm a basketball coach and I'm doing tryouts now. The season started yesterday and we have all the numbers and all the high schools in this area, the numbers are way down when people trying out, because the parents are afraid the kids will catch it and transmit it at home. But the facts are there's about 80 million school kids in America and fewer than a hundred of them have died of COVID and all, every single one of them that did had multiple comorbidities, not a single one, not a single exception to that. And they don't have... there's not a record anywhere in the world of a kid giving COVID to the adult and the adult died.
- So, the danger that these people are trying to avoid really doesn't even exist. Because if you're sitting there with three comorbidities, you're not going out for high school basketball anyway. So I don't want to... you can't criticize the choice of the parents. They're trying to make informed decisions to protect themselves, their families, their kids, but they're doing it with only one side of the information. There shouldn't be sides of information in something like this, but there are, and that's got to get fixed.
- Bill Walton: [11:32](#) But Brian, would you get that fact about adults not catching COVID from kids to the teacher's unions.
- Brian McNicoll: [11:38](#) Oh dear. That's... it would, that would be helpful. Because they don't... they're actively, that's been stopping school from resuming right now is teachers unions.
- Rich McFadden: [11:46](#) Yap.
- Bill Walton: [11:48](#) Well, the important question, Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead guys.
- Rich McFadden: [11:50](#) No. I mean that's, what I don't understand is this seems easy enough for me with regard to high school or high school sports or schools in school sports is the teachers, the faculty and the families of the students get the vaccine if they want it. And the kids don't really need it and everything can move along. But again, we go back to the fear factor because I know several teachers who will not go back to school until there is some proof that everything is... everybody's been vaccinated and everybody's moved along and it's proven to them that it's safe. So, but it seems very reasonable. The kids don't pass it along. Or if they do, it's at a rate where it's not lethal and the faculty, they're the ones who should get vaccinated families or the kids should get vaccinated. We all go back to normal. I can go to

Ticketmaster concerts. But that's not going to be the way it is because people are afraid to go back to the way it was.

- Greg Corombos: [12:49](#) And Bill the issue of the unions has reared its head again this week, the Chicago teacher's union to bail on in-person instruction starting I think around January 11th. And they put out a tweet over the weekend, suggesting that the push for in-person instruction is based in racism, sexism, and misogyny. So that out of fill out your woke bingo card there, but the unions have also got Joe Biden in line. He did an interview over the weekend saying he's talked to the unions and all they need is a hundred billion dollars to get elementary schools ready for the rest of this year. So that doesn't even include high schools or going forward. But if everybody gets the vaccine as they want them to, I'm not sure that the, a hundred billion is necessary. So the politicization of this continues at pace.
- Bill Walton: [13:37](#) Did anybody ask him what the a hundred billion dollars was going to go for?
- Greg Corombos: [13:41](#) Yeah. He said, it goes for sanitizing, ventilation and creating smaller pods of students so the risk of infection is smaller and that means hiring more teachers as well.
- Bill Walton: [13:53](#) Oh my, well, what about the politicization of this? Because we've got a... I mean, I'm still in the camp that hopes that Trump can somehow pull out this election, but if he doesn't, we've got a Biden administration, do people feel like they're going to... does the Biden administration feel like they need to hold the range less tightly because they're in powered now. I mean, this was always to me in this country, a battle against Donald Trump, whatever Donald Trump wanted they hated, how does that... what are the politics?
- Rich McFadden: [14:27](#) I mean, I think the advantage of Biden actually winning if there is an advantage is the fact that people will feel safer. The people that are afraid that I'm going to speak of, I think they will feel safer knowing that Biden is controlling the vaccination process. I don't think they would ever come out of their cave if Trump were still the president.
- Bill Walton: [14:52](#) Greg, what do you think?
- Greg Corombos: [14:53](#) No. Well, I think that's certainly where the media is coming in on this. I mean, you got to the point where the media was cheering studies that showed that hydroxychloroquine wasn't the cure all that president Trump may have suggested it would

be, even though later studies showed that if you used it early on after infection, it was extremely effective. And so once you got to the point where they were cheering for things, Trump was promoting, not to work. The politicization of this was on, in full steam. And so I think you'll get the media very much agreeing with whatever progress the Biden administration claims is happening. And so it's going to be much less confrontational on this issue. And so once Joe Biden's 100 days of mask wearing is done. If he claims that there is a huge bit of progress against the spread of the disease, the media will dutifully report that. And maybe we'll be closer to getting back to normal.

- Rich McFadden: [15:49](#) That's what I don't understand. Greg helped me understand that part. Okay. We've been wearing masks for a hundred days or more. And so what's the next a hundred days going to do that the first hundred days didn't except make people feel better because Biden told them to do it.
- Greg Corombos: [16:05](#) Well, it seems like each time, this issue flares up, which is quite often, there's some sort of a reason that the media and folks on the left will point to for why there was this spike. The most current one of course is people didn't obey the order not to visit with family and friends over Thanksgiving. There was a Trump rally in Georgia on this past Saturday. So if there's a spike in Georgia, I'm sure that will be potentially blamed for it. Protests, the right protests of course are okay. The wrong protests of course are super spreaders, like announcing a Supreme court nominee. So it's all in the eye of the beholder. It's what you want the narrative to be. And sadly, we're more in the age of activism journalism than objective journalism.
- Brian McNicoll: [16:50](#) Yeah. You noticed, you've noticed in the last few days there's been a raft of, "Hey, this started much earlier than we thought research and things are not... it's not as infectious as we thought. And the death rates are way lower than we thought. And given that flu has, seems to disappear from our statistical analysis of disease in America. It's quite possible that flu cases are getting coded as COVID because the hospitals get so much more money." None of that could be uttered in respectable society before November 3rd. But now it's all coming out because now they're trying to manage this back towards normalcy.
- Bill Walton: [17:33](#) The most important thing I want to understand is when do we need... when can we stop wearing masks? I had Jay Richards on the show and you know Jay's a PhD Catholic university expert in the pandemic. And he caught COVID-19 and went into the hospital. And because he had some lung issues wanted to make

sure he was okay, he's fine now, he recovered. But he got to talking about the hospital workers and healthcare workers about their mask. And of course they were covered in hazmat suits, particularly their eyes recovered, everything was covered. And he asked them, "So you're not wearing the cotton mask or surgical masks that the rest of us are, why is that?" And he said, well most of them said, "Well, they don't work." And so we're wearing these ceremonial masks that most people have shown scientifically don't protect you from the virus. I mean, maybe a droplet here, but 99.9% doesn't protect. So when do we get to stop wearing masks guys? I want an answer. And I want a date.

- Rich McFadden: [18:38](#) What day is it? And what did Falsey say yesterday versus what he's saying today?
- Brian McNicoll: [18:45](#) I think 90% of the people who catch it are regular mask wearers adhered to the... I caught it in May and I was doing nothing against the rules. I was staying home. We didn't even order take out food, wear masks, washing hands, all that stuff. Didn't matter. We don't know how it spread. So we can't really...
- Bill Walton: [19:06](#) What was it like catching it? I mean, what was your experience?
- Brian McNicoll: [19:10](#) Well, when I first caught it, the first thing I noticed was my taste went totally haywire things that tasted good, tasted terrible. Then I had a day or two that I was sick and in the way like a flu type of sickness. And then there was about three or four more days where I didn't feel all that good, but I worked and manage my life. But I had to sit home for two weeks. So, but I wasn't sick for long. And I took no medicine whatsoever for it.
- Bill Walton: [19:39](#) Or a cold. Go ahead, guys.
- Rich McFadden: [19:44](#) Brian brought something up a little bit ago that got me thinking. And along with my thought that now that if Biden is actually becomes the next president, that people will start to feel better because they think that the rules are coming from him instead of Trump, it's also the facts. We all in air quotes, we all say "The facts." And the media always wants to dispute anything that Trump or Trump's administration does. But if there's now a Biden administration and they're saying everything is okay, and the media plays along with Biden's theme, that everything is okay. Do we think that that gets us out of this predicament? That the people that are afraid will all of a sudden feel like they're in Shangri-La and this whole thing has passed on.

Bill Walton: [20:33](#) I hope so because the problem, I used to think this was about Trump, but if you look...

Rich McFadden: [20:38](#) I still think it is.

Bill Walton: [20:39](#) Well, but you look at New Zealand and Australia, their lockdowns are egregious. So I know they hate Trump too, they probably hate Trump too, but he's not. He's about 10,000 miles away. So what what's that all about?

Rich McFadden: [20:56](#) I think here it's about Trump. I think it's always been about, he didn't get on it early enough, even though he closed down, travel from China, he made fun of it. Even though he, Polosi was making fun of it after he was. It's... I think here in the United States, it's definitely been about Trump. So that's my question is if Biden steps in here and all of a sudden he's going, "Oh, everything's okay. Economy, can back to normal, kids can go back to school." Does everybody does the media then jump on board with him? And then everybody goes, "Oh, it's all fine. Now we can go back to normal."

Greg Corombos: [21:30](#) Yeah I think so.

Bill Walton: [21:31](#) Can we take a vote, I say yes.

Greg Corombos: [21:34](#) Yeah. I think there'll be moving in that direction. You never know what the teacher's unions want to do. They seem to be happy with the status quo, even though the kids are miserable.

Bill Walton: [21:42](#) Let me finish up. We've got a couple minutes, just 90 seconds left. We started with the vaccinations where each of you give your view about where we go with the vaccinations.

Rich McFadden: [21:53](#) You go first.

Bill Walton: [21:55](#) Me.

Rich McFadden: [21:57](#) Anyone. Anyone go first and then if it works out, if it... I'm in the same camp with Greg, I'm going to stand back at the end of the line. Watch everybody else, get it for a month or two. And then if it seems okay, I'll get it. Whether I'll give it to my kids. I don't think so. But definitely my mother-in-law, my mother, my wife and myself, my mother-in-law, my mother I would give it to it right away. My wife and myself waiting a few months, my kids No.

Bill Walton: [22:23](#) Does that say something about what you think about your mother and mother-in-law versus your kid?

Rich McFadden: [22:27](#) I don't... with the technology.

Bill Walton: [22:27](#) Is it the age? Yeah, I mean.

Rich McFadden: [22:33](#) Well, it's the age. They're more, they're more susceptible, but it also with the technology, I'm not worried about their DNA being changed or switched up through this RNA technology that they're using in this vaccine, myself I still got a little time left. I want to make sure my DNA is not being affected in any way. And my kids, not a chance in hell.

Brian McNicoll: [22:52](#) I, since I had it, I think I've been ordered to the back of the line from what I've read, the people who have it will be among the last to get it. I think everyone who lives here with me, my family is been exposed to it enough that they have antibodies. So I'll probably be with you and wait in the back of the line.

Greg Corombos: [23:13](#) No, I think the people who are at highest risk for this and the people who have the comorbidities and other serious issues, even before contracting COVID, who are susceptible to a really tough battle with it, I think we need to make sure that we protect them as best we can and push them to the front of the line here. Assuming the vaccine is safe and effective. And for the rest of us, hopefully I'm making sound judgments. Like I said before, I'll be waiting way back in the line to make sure that it doesn't have any massive side effects and then go from there. But if this is the key to getting back to normal, I think most people will do it, but the more the government forces you to do it, or the more private sector tells you can't be our customer. I think the Liberty loving part of our being is going to resist in a big way.

Rich McFadden: [24:05](#) Yep.

Bill Walton: [24:05](#) Well, let's get together again because this may in a few months, when we see how this is playing out, because this is one of those lines, most people like to jump in front of lines to get ahead. This may be one where people are jumping behind the line, so they see other people do. This is going to be an interesting social construct. Well, anyway, thanks guys. Rich McFadden and Greg Corombos, radio America, Brian McNicoll frequent contributor. This has been extremely helpful to me and I hope to people who are listening. So anyway, guys, thanks. Thanks soon. And we will all be talking soon.

Rich McFadden:	24:45	Thanks Bill.
Brian McNicoll:	24:47	Thanks Bill.
Greg Corombos:	24:47	Thank you Bill.
Bill Walton:	24:47	Anyway, thanks. We'll be talking again soon and thank you for listening. We love to hear what you think. Let me know on parlor, Facebook and Twitter, where you can find The Bill Walton show for previous episodes. You can find us on Apple podcast, Spotify and YouTube, and of course @thebillwaltonshow.com .
Speaker 5:	25:05	Thanks for listening. Want more? Be sure to subscribe@thebillwaltonshow.com or on iTunes.