

Episode 140: Talking with Charles Murray

- Speaker 1: Welcome to The Bill Walton Show, featuring conversations with leaders, entrepreneurs, artists, and thinkers, fresh perspectives on money, culture, politics and human flourishing. Interesting people, interesting things.
- Bill Walton: Welcome to The Bill Walton Show. I'm Bill Walton. Identity [00:00:30] politics and charges of racism and white privilege pose an existential threat to the American experiment and risk tearing the country apart. And what is stunning and hurtful to many of us, is that these explosive charges seem to float free from reality. I was thrilled to find that Charles Murray, one of America's greatest social scientists has now weighed in on this with his latest book, Facing Reality: Two [00:01:00] Truths about Race in America. In it he argues that we must confront genuine race differences while at the same time defending our nation's historic commitment to a melting pot and the goal of colorblindness. We cannot have a government that plays racial favorites, then dispenses favors and penalties according to the identity groups that government assigns to Americans.
- Charles Murray, a scholar at the American [00:01:30] Enterprise Institute, which is where I first got to know him, burst into prominence in 1984 with the publication of Losing Ground, which was followed by The Bell Curve in 1994, and Coming Apart in 2012. As you can see from my mini bookcase on the table here, I own and I've read most all of Charles books and I consider Charles to be a great American. Charles thrilled you're here.
- Charles Murray: Well, it's delightful to have a chance to get together with you.
- Bill Walton: [00:02:00] When I started doing this show, I don't know, three, four years ago, I had a dream guests list and you were at the top of it. I'm glad we finally have you here. Facing Reality: Two Truths about Race in America by Charles Murray, co-author of The Bell Curve, they're interrelated. Why'd you write the book?
- Charles Murray: Well, I wasn't supposed to be writing any more books. I was supposedly done with all of this. And then last July when [00:02:30] there were the protests and the riots. Then the reaction is what stunned me because there were all these accusations of America being systemically racist, and they were picked up uncritically by The New York Times, The Washington Post and the major networks. What surprised me and dismayed me was, that these major outlets did not say anything about, well, this is complicated. We still have [00:03:00] racism in America, I don't deny that, it's still a factor in American life, but there are also other reasons besides racism that we continue to have disparities. I finally decided somebody has to say this. If they are going to ignore this kind of evidence and instead say yes, yes, yes, we're systematically racist, somebody has to push back.

Bill Walton: The pushback, you're doing it based on research, a lot of the research you did for The Bell Curve. [00:03:30] When I call you a social scientist, I want to underline the scientist part of it. I mean, you do extensive data analysis over and over and over again to make sure you get this exactly right.

Charles Murray: And Bill, I want people watching to know, for one thing, all of the raw databases I used for the work in the book, the texts and the book are downloadable. Encounter Books, which is the publisher for the book, has a website and they have a page for this book. And [00:04:00] you go to that page, you click on them and you feed these into your Excel or statistical analysis program. If you don't like my conclusions, go ahead and take a look at the data and tell me how you see it differently.

Bill Walton: The two differences, the two facts, two truths are?

Charles Murray: The first is that there is a large difference between criminal offenses, violent offenses among blacks and among whites. [00:04:30] This has all sorts of effects on the functioning of cities, but it especially has effects on policing, so that when police are going into a low income black neighborhood, they are facing a much more challenging and dangerous environment than when they go out to a white suburb. And being professional police, behaving responsibly, doing the right thing means that they will have to take steps that they don't take in a less challenging environment. They have to worry more about establishing [00:05:00] their authority. They have to worry more about taking precautions against threats, they have to call for backup quicker, and a variety of other things which aren't racist. They are being professional.

Now, Bill, I am not denying the reality of these videos that have gone viral of a cop shooting a black man walking away from him in the back. I am not condoning that. I'm saying it deserves the severest punishment. I'm saying that they are [00:05:30] very rare and to tar the police with being racist on the basis of those is doing a disservice to the police. That's one of them, the difference in violent crime, and we can get into the specific numbers later. And the second one is one which, of course was raised in The Bell Curve and has been a source of huge controversy, and that is differences in cognitive ability among Latinos and Asians and blacks and whites.

Here I want to [00:06:00] say to the people watching us, I understand that there are all sorts of issues you may have about, does IQ really represent intelligence, and this, that, and the other thing? I'm talking about a very simple set of empirical statements. When you administer mental tests, they can be IQ tests, they can be SATs. They can be tests of reading and writing and math. You find consistently and have for a long time significant differences among the races. [00:06:30] The you in turn have relationships between test scores and job performance, between test scores and performance in the classroom. When you have difference in test scores, that has implications. It has implications down the road for the success of blacks in occupations, the success in school and so forth.

Once again, there are things you need to keep in mind. We're talking about a difference [00:07:00] in means, okay? A difference in means does not sort people into separate bins. The way I usually put it is, that millions of blacks are smarter than millions of whites. That is also an empirically true statement. It is also true that the entire range of ability from really dumb, to really brilliant is represented among whites, among blacks, amongst Asians, among Latinos, for all four. If we still treated people as individuals, if that was [00:07:30] still the ideal for how we dealt with people, none of these differences would cause any problems. They cause a problem in terms of social consequences for large groups and we can get into detail on that too.

Bill Walton: When you talk about... You and I were joking, I took a lot of statistic classes, The Bell Curve, what is The Bell Curve?

Charles Murray: It's the normal distribution, and it's a bell shaped curve. It looks like [crosstalk 00:07:58].

Bill Walton: ... slope up and [00:08:00] your slope down. And so you get half the population on one side of it's normal, and half on the others.

Charles Murray: Right. But everybody's dispersed across it. It just drives me nuts when I talk about these differences in means, and then somebody will name a brilliant black academician or a brilliant black executive, and they say, well, how can you explain that? Easy, because you've got distribution of ability within blacks as well as [inaudible 00:08:30].

Bill Walton: [00:08:30] As you can see from my library here, you're one of my leading authors in my library, but you're outranked by one guy, Tom Sowell [crosstalk 00:08:40].

Charles Murray: I know. Tom [crosstalk 00:08:47]. We don't say he's one of the great black economists. We just say, he's one of the greatest-

Bill Walton: One of the greatest economists. He's colorblind.

Charles Murray: He produces, his output just depresses me enormously, because [00:09:00] for years, he is 90 years old now. But for years and years, he was coming out with a book, it felt like every week, but it wasn't, but they were good, they were substantive. They had stuff in it. Tom is incredible.

Bill Walton: When we look at the mean, the average, and the middle of The Bell Curve, we're saying that the groups operate on different places on the axis. You take Asian, European, white, Hispanic, black, and you go into a lot of interesting definitions [00:09:30] in the book. I highly recommend reading the book to understand how careful you were about this, but they set a different mean-

Charles Murray: They are overlapping distributions. So just to envision those bell curves and just the way that they overlap each other, so that people in each group, it's actually true, for example, that there are Asians that aren't very smart, but it's also true that the Asian mean is higher than the others. So that also means proportionally, there are way more Asians [00:10:00] out at the high end.

Bill Walton: So the Asian means is at the top, 106, 108.

Charles Murray: About 108 in the IQ scoring system.

Bill Walton: And then?

Charles Murray: And then whites are around 103, 104.

Bill Walton: And then?

Charles Murray: Well, I used a very conservative, not politically conservative, but scientifically conservative estimate and saying they're about at 91, that may be a little too high. But I'd rather err on the side of being too high and similarly [00:10:30] Latinos around 94.

Bill Walton: What does it mean in terms of the workplace, in terms of career, in terms of achievement?

Charles Murray: Let's start with the central problem, which is that we artificially create differences in the universities and the workplaces that do not need to exist. Let's say you have a 13 point difference [00:11:00] between whites and blacks, 13 IQ point difference. And that's in the general population. If college admissions committees just simply didn't pay any attention to race and looked at test scores, but also looked at GPA in high school, looked at recommendations, looked at the whole package of things and made their decisions without paying any attention to race, it would work out so that the distribution of cognitive ability among the blacks who were admitted, was just about the same as everybody else's. [00:11:30] Okay? Similarly in the workplace. If employers hired that way, there wouldn't be any difference in the ability of the people who were hired, who we were white and black, but that's not the way it works.

Some estimates are that in elite universities, being black gives you the equivalent of a 200 plus SAT point difference in your chances of getting into a school. That's a big thing. And [00:12:00] which means that, that schools have the same, roughly the same differences among the races as exist in the public at large. The problem with this is, that the low performing students are concentrated among blacks. It's inevitable. If you are going to admit people [00:12:30] with two different standards, I don't care if you're admitting people from Iowa versus people from South Dakota, but if you use different standards for admitting them, and one group has a much lower set of scores than the

other group, you're going to get differences in classroom performance. And the problem is everybody knows that, and nobody wants to talk about it.

Think of it this way, imagine that you are a college age, Tom Sowell, and you were admitted and you are [00:13:00] probably smarter than anybody else in the incoming class of any race. And everybody asks themselves, I wonder if he's in affirmative action admission?

Bill Walton: Well, I saw that. I was CEO of a company involved in private equity and real estate investing and things like that. We hired lots and lots of MBAs, and somebody would say, this guy went to Princeton and Harvard Business School, fantastic. And it's even better he's black. That was fantastic, except I always asked the question, well, [00:13:30] your question, okay, did he get there on merit or did you get there because somebody gave him an extra 400 points on his test? How you get into that as a very difficult situation, delicate. Let me just check here. You're watching The Bill Walton Show. I'm here with the great Charles Murray, and we're talking about The Bell Curve and differences in cognitive ability among different groups how tricky it is to talk about it. It's sort of the third rail, or it's one [00:14:00] of those topics that nobody seems to talk about honestly, but it needs to be talked about honestly,

Charles Murray: And it should be scary. That's the thing that is the most depressing. When I said earlier, this doesn't have to be a problem. I was not being a Pollyanna, I was saying that it's only a problem because we have coupled an original ambition to be colorblind, which of course is racist speech according to critical race theory. We [00:14:30] coupled that ideal of being colorblind in 1964, with Lyndon Johnson's call to have equality of outcomes in 1965, shifting away from, are we giving blacks a fair shake in admissions to colleges and employment? To, do we have enough blacks in our college, in incoming class and enough blacks in our workforce where the moral responsibility to give a fair shake was submerged [00:15:00] by the legal responsibility of people to adhere to quotas, de facto quotas and de facto pressures from the government to equalize outcomes as much as possible.

Bill Walton: When I bring this up, I read The Bell Curve when it first came out and it was controversial at the time, remains controversial, but I think the conclusions were accurate. When I talk with people about [00:15:30] it, on all political sides, they are extremely uncomfortable with talking about this. They look at it, they shift in their seat and they say, let's go, say, who do you think is going to win the pennant?

Charles Murray: Well, I get uncomfortable about it too, because to do it is to have people assume you must be coming at this through a racist motivation. And so one of the problems in talking about it honestly, is for me not to go overboard [00:16:00] trying to prove I'm a nice guy and to stick to what we need to focus on. I'll give you an example of the kind of distraction that is really hard to get around. A lot of the controversy about The Bell Curve, which is not about race, by the way, it had a chapter about race, but it's about the role of IQ in shaping

America's class structure. But the thing that caused all the controversy was, one paragraph. We were talking in the chapter about race of the [00:16:30] relative roles of environment and genes in creating these differences, and Richard Herrnstein, my coauthor and I reviewed the evidence for both of those hypotheses.

And at the end of it said, the jury is out on this. We don't really know, probably both are implicated to some degree. We don't have any idea what the mix is. That one paragraph is translated into, The Bell Curve tries to prove the genetic inferiority of blacks. [00:17:00] I'm not exaggerating. It was that one paragraph that did it. In the case of facing reality, I'm already confronting people who want to focus obsessively on what is the cause of these differences. Now I understand the urge to do that, because if you want to eliminate the differences or reduce them, you've got to understand the causes. That's fine. What I'm saying in this short book is, it's clarifying to focus on what is. [00:17:30] I'll give you an example. Suppose that we had some plan for reducing the difference in violent crime rates between blacks and whites, that we could be quite confident would work if we implemented it correctly, it'll take 10 years to do it, but it'll work.

Fine. Let's go ahead and do it. It's expensive. Let's do it. That does not change the situation of a white police officer or a black police officer tomorrow who was going into a black neighborhood. The situation tomorrow, despite the fact we have a solution down [00:18:00] the road, is just the same as it is today and it will affect behavior. Similarly, if we had ways to narrow the black, white difference in test scores down the road, that's great. Let's go after it. Mind you, we've been spending hundreds of billions of dollars trying to do that for the last 40 years, but nevermind, if you have a way to do it, great, that does not change the implications of the existing difference right now, in terms of the job performance of [00:18:30] the blacks you've hired and the whites you've fired.

Bill Walton: When I read the book, gosh, 25 years ago, one takeaway was that intelligence is real and there's something that you call G, and that it is predictive of success in all sorts of different areas, that it's largely heritable and it's not, the nature versus nurture, [00:19:00] it's largely nature.

Charles Murray: That was a large component for a nurture as well, but-

Bill Walton: Largely.

Charles Murray: ... Largely [crosstalk 00:19:09].

Bill Walton: Largely, so you're born with it. And the other thing is, it doesn't change much in the course of your lifetime and you can do all sorts of interventions and you might temporarily raise somebody, but then that fades pretty quickly. So we're kind of-

Charles Murray: [crosstalk 00:19:26].

Bill Walton: So we all hate this idea. I did pretty well [00:19:30] on my test, so I'm happy with it, but for most people, even me, there are people that scored higher and I'm thinking, well, wait a second, they're going to be ahead of me forever. The implication is, and it seems so, it makes you feisty. You want to say, look, I don't want to have this number and that's my number forever and we can't change it. I think that's why there's such resistance.

Charles Murray: I want to say to them, IQ is more predictive of job performance than any other single indicator, including job interviews [00:20:00] and GPA and recommendations. But that doesn't mean it explains everything. In fact, it only explains maybe 16, 20% of the variation, which means there's a whole lot besides IQ that goes into it.

Bill Walton: What are the other parts of that?

Charles Murray: The other things that exert an influence are personality characteristics, such as conscientiousness. That's very helpful. People talk about emotional [00:20:30] intelligence and they talk about grit.

Bill Walton: While we had the seven intelligences that's Howard Gardner.

Charles Murray: The answer is, does persistence help and tenacity and simple hard work, in terms of job performance and classroom performance? Yeah, it does.

Bill Walton: Well, you write about it in your book, but what troubles me is right now, you see this whole thing about whiteness and white culture. And there was an exhibit in the Smithsonian black history museum, [00:21:00] and they had a white culture exhibit, were they ever exhibit? Then they had a set of characteristics that were characteristic of whiteness and white culture. And they're basically the bourgeois virtues, thrift, forbearance, the kind of things that I think of as sort of all these good things to be that in my life have helped me get ahead, because I tried to practice that. That was seen as a bad thing.

Charles Murray: [00:21:30] How did they indicate it was bad?

Bill Walton: They sneered at it. They sneered at it. Whites were rigid and all those sort of things that may or may not be. There was stereotyping this whiteness and that was what you didn't want to be. I don't think there was an exact, there wasn't an opposite ideal, but this little cultural framework. If there are two realities, which would be cognitive ability and propensity for violent crime, [00:22:00] I think there's a third force at work, which is what you got to buy into the success factors, the grit and all that sort of thing. The other 84% of things that aren't explained by IQ. Here I am lecturing Charles Murray.

Charles Murray: What makes this most irritating, because you have a lot of whites and the elites who are prostrating themselves virtually to proclaim [00:22:30] their consciousness has been raised. They never realized they were racist, and now

they do realize that without knowing that they're racist, they're very apologetic. I got news for you, those same senior people in the media or in the IT industry who have announced all of this, and they buy into this systemic racism, as they are hiring their next employees, they are looking for IQ, conscientiousness, persistence, [00:23:00] forbearance, they're looking for all of the qualities that you just described that are being characterized as white. If I were a black person, I would find it very offensive to hear that forbearance and thrift are white virtues as opposed to things I'm proud of being.

And I certainly would feel the same way if I were Latino. I will not try to hide my feelings here, I [00:23:30] think a lot of this rhetoric coming out of CRT, critical race theory is idiotic. The whole idea that the colorblind ideal is racist. There's an elaborate rationale for that, is I think pernicious. The idea that that blacks cannot, that they don't learn through analytical thinking the way that [00:24:00] whites do and that's a good thing, is insulting to a whole lot of blacks who think very clearly and articulately and perceptively in an analytical fashion. It's hard for me to believe that it has gotten the traction it's gotten. It's amazing to me that it has gotten the traction it's gotten. I got an explanation of that. Once or something that I think [00:24:30] points to something, I was talking to the head of a large media organization, who she'll go otherwise unidentified.

He said, we're all terrified of our staffs. And by that, he meant the 20 somethings who were quite junior in the pecking order, but who are very woke and who are very strident and exert a lot of influence within the organization. The most dramatic example of that was the way the James [00:25:00] Bennet editor of the editorial page of The New York Times was forced out for allowing the op-ed by Senator Cotton, which was advocating a position that was held by millions and millions of smart, thoughtful Americans. James Bennet, in my opinion is one of the finest journalists in America, in the old fashioned sense of journalists. The idea that he could be pushed out by pressure from below, which is apparently [00:25:30] what happened, is pathetic.

I think a lot of the reason that you see the parroting of the systemic racist line, is not because there are no grownups in the room in a lot of the media organizations, I think it's because they're terrified of the people who aren't grownups. I think that the analogy with chairman Mao's Red Guards, is uncomfortably close. We're old [00:26:00] enough to know what I'm referring to, when I say chairman Mao's Red Guards. People would just terrorize.

Bill Walton: Well, I guess that was run by his actress wife. And they were basically calling out people who had any education or anybody, and they demonize people by classes not as individually.

Charles Murray: Yeah. And it was youngsters who were doing this.

Bill Walton: You're watching The Bill Walton Show. I'm here with Charles Murray, and we're talking about the frustrating nature of critical race theory and [00:26:30] why it seems to be so unreal in terms of the way the world really works. You

mentioned Mao, Sarah and I, when we're in the car, she reads out loud. Right now she's reading Modern Times by Paul Johnson. We came across the chapter on Lenin and the Soviet Union, when he started the Soviet Union. One of the first things that Lenin did, he practically invented it in the 20th century, I think he did. [00:27:00] Was he took away the notion of individual guilt. He said, you're guilty because you're in this class or that class or this other class. It doesn't matter who you are as an individual, it's a group guilt.

He committed most of the terrors. And then Mao 50 years later in China does roughly the same thing, they call out classes. America's ignorance of the... This is the way to tell Tyrian proceeds. [00:27:30] You put people to tell Tyrian proceed, you put people into a group, single out the group and then-

Charles Murray: What we were seeing in its milder form here, and the reason I wrote the book, is not just that, I think that critical race theory pedals an incorrect statement about America. We're not a systemically racist society. It also directly repudiates the American Creed. Now, when I say American Creed, once again, [00:28:00] we old timers know what I'm talking about, but is not a term that's been in use for decades. But what it meant was, as understood by the millions of people who were drawn to America in 20th centuries, was that you come to America and you will be judged for who you are, not by who your parents were, not by your religion, not by your race, color or creed. That was the ideal expressed in the declaration of [00:28:30] independence. That was the ideal that Martin Luther King evoked in his famous speech at the Lincoln Memorial.

In fact, that speech was basically saying to white America, it's time for you to make good on the promise of the American Creed for blacks. If you say, well, America fell short of achieving that ideal, yeah, we did. We also made huge progress.

Bill Walton: Oh yeah.

Charles Murray: And if we shift [00:29:00] to an understanding that we are systemically racist and therefore the power of the state is appropriately used to favor one group over another, it's all over.

Bill Walton: Or punish.

Charles Murray: And also punish. The real danger here, that's a big enough danger all by itself. Even the way things are and the way the Biden administration seems to have bought into the systemic racism rhetoric. It has some programs [00:29:30] that are specifically earmarked for blacks, but you don't give the same benefits to whites. That's kind of scary. But the really scary thing, is if whites start to adopt identity politics. Here's the nightmare vision I have. You have the elites who have responded very guiltily to the accusations of the critical [00:30:00] race theorists, but you have tens of millions of whites out there who are saying, wait a minute, I'm not a racist. I haven't behaved as a racist. I don't think as a racist.

I'm respectful of my black colleagues at work and have friends among them. And you're telling me that I'm saturated in privilege and I've been oppressing blacks, and I'm responsible for all the problems of blacks. Give me a break. It's only small step from that to say, [00:30:30] to hell with it. If they can play identity politics, so can I.

Bill Walton: I think we're close to that.

Charles Murray: I think we're very close.

Bill Walton: I think particularly with the critical race theory being taught in schools now, and the way that parents are waking up to what's in the curriculum, going to school boards, getting absolute pushback from school boards. I think they're waking up to the fact that the school boards, the teachers unions, the curriculum developers, the teachers, colleges are all aligned against [00:31:00] them. And they didn't really know that. Actually the pandemic did us a favor. It made the kids stay home, so the parents could find out what they were learning. But we are getting very close to that tipping point.

Charles Murray: I want to say to all those folks, I understand why the temptation to say, you want to play that game. We can play that game. It's a very strong temptation. I also want you to understand that if whites start treating their identity as whites, as the framework [00:31:30] for thinking about public policy, it's all over. What made America exceptional was our view of the equality of the individual, not in terms of outcomes, but the innate human dignity that people have and their opportunities.

Bill Walton: Anybody would ever be a critic of Charles Murray, people who criticize The Bell Curve as a book, never read it. I'd recommend before you say anything about Charles Murray, you read this, because you started out with the American Creed [00:32:00] and you also make a point that America in 1960 was 88% European white. And it was about 12% African black. And that was about it. There were very few Hispanics, very few Asians. They didn't even show up statistically. Now, 60% of America is European white. And what is it? Hispanics are about-

Charles Murray: 19%.

Bill Walton: 19%. Blacks are still 12. Asians are now 8%. Now the thing I believe true, what you believe, is that 40% [00:32:30] that's not European white, they think of themselves as Americans and they're here because of the American Creed, almost entirely. And so to get us into these categories where we are, because we all pretty much think the same thing.

Charles Murray: I want people to start saying what they think out loud, because I am absolutely confident that 80, 90% of African Americans still want the ideal of a colorblind [00:33:00] society. They want a fair shape. That's what they're looking for. And that's what Latinos are looking for. If we have 80, 90% of Americans who still

feel this way about our traditional ideals, why are we letting ourselves be drowned out by the people who were saying that this is an irredeemably racist country?

Bill Walton: How do we message this?

Charles Murray: I had an epiphany [00:33:30] last year when a friend of mine said that this is such a serious situation, that we're all obligated to do whatever we can. This is not business as usual. You've got to pull out all the stops. And so you ask, what can we do? Well, I write books. That's the only thing I know how to do. For me, what can I do? I can write a book. What can an ordinary guy, [00:34:00] let's say he's an insurance agent in some city, what can he do? He can start to be more open about this stuff about racist, that colorblind is a racist idea is just crazy. I especially want him to do it if he's on the center left. If he's the person who's voted Democrat all his life, and he's a liberal, but he still believes in the American Creed.

And lots of people on the center left are like that. [00:34:30] I especially want people who are black to start saying that out loud. Say it, not publicly in the newspapers, but just say it to fellow blacks and same with Latinos. To the extent we all come out of the closet and say, we still love this country for what it stands for. That would be a step in the right direction. The real solution is not within our grasp now, but I think we have to think about how we would get there. We should, once [00:35:00] again, change the laws, so that it is illegal for any government agency to treat people differently, according to their race. It's illegal to incentivize others to treat them differently according to their race. That the role of the government is to be impartial when it comes to race, to make every effort possible to maintain that impartiality, because it's only that impartiality that keeps us all safe.

Bill Walton: Affirmative [00:35:30] action.

Charles Murray: Root stock, everything.

Bill Walton: Everything. All of it.

Charles Murray: All of it. It's not politically feasible right now. But I think-

Bill Walton: I don't know. I don't know. I think there's a real sea change. There's a real changing of views that people say, look, as I said at the outset, a lot of us are just so saddened really that all of a sudden after you try for years and years to do the right thing, you want to bring people along, [00:36:00] year after year after year to find a well, that's not enough. Just the fact that you're white makes you an enemy of the people.

Charles Murray: I want people to think how much better the workplace would be if everybody knew that everybody who's being hired is being hired under the same standard,

how wonderful that would be for whites who right now are not happy saying to themselves, I wonder if this is [00:36:30] an affirmative action hire, how nice it would be if you were black and know that nobody was thinking that about you, and know that the reason nobody's thinking about you is because you got in through exactly the same standards that everybody else here was hired.

- Bill Walton: Was it in your book or did Douglas Murray put it in his book about the percentage of these classes of people that are employees of Google?
- Charles Murray: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Bill Walton: Take a guess.
- Charles Murray: A lot of Asians.
- Bill Walton: A lot [00:37:00] of Asians. It's about 40% Asian or something like that.
- Charles Murray: I noticed.
- Bill Walton: Like 1% black, 1% Hispanic. It looks like it looks like Hong Kong.
- Charles Murray: One of the things that is going to be interesting over the next decade as Asians go from six or 8% of the population to 10, 12, 14% of the population, is that, given the incredible productivity [00:37:30] they bring to the workplace and so forth, there's going to be major changes, I think for the better, but in the way that elite industries are run.
- Bill Walton: Well and they also have the cultural values. They've got the IQ [crosstalk 00:37:44]. They've got what Europeans called bourgeois virtues, but they've got that in space.
- Charles Murray: Believe me I've witnessed it firsthand how the Asian culture works, and the incentives for the children to do well in the school [00:38:00] that Asian parents imposed are multiples of the pressures that white parents bring on that. That's just a statement of fact.
- Bill Walton: Circling back to, just staying with this idea of ending affirmative action and treating us as Americans who believe in the American Creed and want to bring people in who support that. Your notion about these kids, that because of the affirmative action criteria get into colleges, [00:38:30] it really hurts them. You end up getting into a top school and all of a sudden you find yourself at the very bottom of the class.
- Charles Murray: This is one of these things that is hard to talk about again, because here's this white guy saying, affirmative action hurts blacks. Isn't that patronizing? Well, I'll tell you something. If you're seeing an extremely talented black kid who wants to be an engineer and could be a terrific engineer if he went to Iowa State,

which is a very good [00:39:00] engineering school, by the way. But if you send that kid to MIT, with the credentials that were getting him into Iowa State, that doesn't make him any less smart. It means that he may be in the top five percentiles of ability and the things that go into being an engineer. His white and Asian classmates are in the top 10th of the top percentile and that makes a difference.

I would love to see elite colleges release [00:39:30] the dropout rates for their black and Latino students. I think it would be shocking [crosstalk 00:39:37]. Because these are kids who are really, really smart kids. They may have gotten in because of affirmative action, but in an absolute sense, they're really smart, but they're thrown into a cauldron that makes them feel stupid. And a lot of them give up and drop out. But don't look for colleges to publish those statistics anytime soon, because they don't want to admit to what they're doing.

Bill Walton: Well, I don't know whether we're revering [00:40:00] off topic, or maybe amplifying the topic, but the thing I get offended by, is that you because you're white and I because I'm white, Murray, I assume you're Scottish.

Charles Murray: Scots-Irish.

Bill Walton: I'm Scots-Irish. We're both Scots-Irish. We're not authorized to talk about these issues because we don't have the proper identity. I went to a high school that was 75% black. I could claim I was a minority. And [00:40:30] this was pre Stokely Carmichael. I graduated in 67. We didn't really see race that much. At least I didn't. And I don't think they did much either. What do you say to people that we're not allowed to talk about these things because we don't have the ethnic identity to experience what they've experienced?

Charles Murray: In your case, you have credentials I don't have, because I went to a high school of virtually [00:41:00] all white. I think that the only thing you can do is not try to pretend that you deeply empathize with blacks if you're Scots-Irish like us. I think you stick to, be as dispassionate as possible, and also appropriately sympathetic, when you see things happening to black kids, that if they happen to your kids, you would get very angry about, that's one thing we can [00:41:30] do. Another thing is, we're Scots-Irish, right? You know Scots-Irish are famous for? Being drunk and violent.

Bill Walton: Whiskey. I thought it was me.

Charles Murray: Whiskey. You're proud of your Scots-Irish ancestry.

Bill Walton: I am.

Charles Murray: I'm proud of mine, but the fact is, there's a lot of drunkenness and violence.

Bill Walton: But it's also, remember the highlands clearance.

Charles Murray: Oh yes.

Bill Walton: In Scotland. The Brits or the Lords basically said, look, we'd [00:42:00] rather have sheep than people. And so they cleared all us Scots off the highlands and that's why we ended up in the Appalachians.

Charles Murray: Well, we were talking about violent crime and black, white differences in violent crime. What do you think the differences were between the Scots-Irish and the Quakers? We are all God's children and none of us are perfect. This business of trying to rank races in [00:42:30] terms of their merit as human beings by any given trait, is just silly. I guess of all the irritating aspects of the reaction to The Bell Curve, the one was, that said, this is talking about superiority of whites, inferiority of blacks. If there's anything that that book makes clear, is we are complicated bundles of traits. And the fact is I wouldn't trade the traits of Scots-Irish that aren't that admirable, because they're part [00:43:00] of my heritage and who I am, and I'm proud of them. That is true of every race, is true of men thinking about being males. It's true of women about being females. The idea that we are rank ordered from superior to inferior is not just morally wrong, it is empirically stupid.

Bill Walton: I think that's a wrap. I want to go to a seminar. [00:43:30] The book, the solution that's not within our grasp is end affirmative action. That's the ideal, just get rid of all the different categories. But the one that is within our grasp, as I think you just summarized, is where we talk about the idea of restoring the American Creed.

Charles Murray: Yeah. And that we express openly and proudly that America's ideal is to take every person as they come, and that it is wrong [00:44:00] to label people according to any of their identities. And that identity politics is in a sense, I hate to use the word evil, because it's too melodramatic, but if you love what America is supposed to stand for, it's evil.

Bill Walton: Charles Murray, thank you.

Charles Murray: Always good to talk to you.

Bill Walton: Hope we're going to get you back. I want to get you back again, to talk about the stack of books here and how you've progressed. There's [00:44:30] a lot in here and there's a lot of new.

Charles Murray: I'd Love to do it.

Bill Walton: Okay, great. We'll have you back soon. Thank you. You've been watching The Bill Walton Show, here with Charles Murray and a very interesting book, Facing Reality, which I highly recommend everybody look through it. There's a lot of wisdom in this and you'll learn a lot. Anyway, thanks for joining us and I'll see you soon.

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