

Dan Boecker: One thing I will say though, is that these sort of, let's say just explosion of unoused people that you see, you've been seeing in California over the last five to six years has now completely hit the Pacific Northwest as well. Yeah. I mean, there was a real feeling being there of the wheel.. like, Arlen our drummer from Wold Parade and I kept noticing, and Spencer as well, that there's a feeling of the wheels coming off the bus, you know.

Riley Quinn: Okay. Tell me.

Dan: So it seems like post-pandemic, that sort of post-pandemic collapse of commercial business and real estate have left these sort of just weird gaps where the machine is running, the machine of capitalism is running... Like, this is a minor complaint, but just I noticed in Portland like, you'll never really know if something is open or not. It might just randomly be closed. And just moreover, like getting around airports... I mean, there are tons of articles about this. People love to complain about how shitty airports are now, but they're right. I mean, it's, you know, you feel that they are understaffed. You feel a haunted house vibe when you are when you are traveling, you feel that things are working... Maybe not the way they should.

Riley: I really do feel what you're saying though about like everything just... it feels as though all of the all of the error margins have been exceeded for things continuing to run?

Dan: Yes.

Riley: And the reason it sounds so often like consumer complaining, is that the way most people just sort of interact with the economy at large is by consuming services and goods and stuff. And you can get a sense, I think, from your experiences just going and interacting with the economy in a normal way if things are working well.

Dan: That's exactly, that's exactly right. Like we don't perceive the state crumbling. We don't perceive the state crumbling in a material way. Because especially in America, there is no state infrastructure to interface with. You are only interfacing with capitalism and the network of treats and, and, you know, businesses providing services. There's no state transport to interact with. You're just interacting with material capitalism.

And moreover than that also consumer capitalism. Well, as you're interacting with airports and the shops and so on and so on, taxis. And it's long, long have we known that sort of all of the state provided sort of bits of that in the, in the US were never really there. Or there like a 100 years ago... in Canada are kind of creaking. And in the UK, boy, does it depend where you are! Because it goes between works great and is like, I don't know what the Inland Empire trying to catch a bus in the Inland Empire in California, which I can only assume is very difficult.

Dan: I would also add the other big signifier, is that the big shift that I noticed... I grew up in the Pacific Northwest. There always been a sort of floating population of unhoused people up and down the coast. That's just true. But it has exponentially grown. And the one big difference I can I can sort of see with my own eyes from say, 2019 to 2022 is that these unhoused people are so poorly provided for and the systems that support their lives are so creaky that they are now building what I would call informal architecture, which is something I've never seen really that far up the coast. I saw it in California before the pandemic, but definitely just driving up and down between Southern Oregon and Northern Washington. Just seeing actual structures built semi-permanent structures built under highway overpasses, for instance, in vacant lots. I'm talking like scavenged lumber and like actual shantytowns, now popping up. And one interesting side note is everywhere you look in this corridor, you're going to see one type of garbage and that is electric scooters that have been destroyed and or thrown away. Part of, you know what I mean? Like like that. We kept seeing just piles of scooters under a bridge thrown into a river. And that's... the scooter became representative of just like the failure of the last gasp of like Utopian Capitalism, of like our decade.

Riley: You know, that is what the scooter companies all are. Is that the scooter companies are all just sort of physical manifestations of the interest rate being 0. Of the idea that you can, you can just combine like you can just become a rentier of a thing that you can just spread out everywhere. Just circumvent every single law, regional local ordinance, what ever you want to fucking circumvent, every regulation designed to stop insane shit like this from happening. And then no one really asked for them. No one really likes them. No, they're pretty useless, but they were just everywhere because "what if there was a market there? I guess we have to capture it. In order to capture it, we have to create it." And then a bunch of other people are also going to try to capture our market. Which means that we end up with piles and piles and piles of useless scooters. That if you imagined money is representing a claim on human labor, and if it was directed at anything else, could have created a house for someone. And what else? Well, anything else?

Dan: You say it could have provided a house for somebody, but I did see one encampment in Portland where people had essentially taken a bunch of scooters and created a defensive fortification with them.

Riley: So if we write that in a fucking story, they'd be called heavy-handed.

Dan: Yeah. It's where it's working.

Riley: I guess what I think I mean, I'm a firm believer that the sort of most things that most things are caused by the question of either how am I going to eat or how am I going to ensure that my children and their children never need to work to eat? And if most big choices are made on the basis of those at the answers to those questions... And if the way that the state decided we're going to keep social reproduction taking over is have interest rates be 0. And we live in, we live in the world of financial capitalism.

You know, where it is, your access to just this whole sort of shifting morass of fictional capital enables you to do and be whatever you need to do and be that I suppose has spent since 2008 basically living at the extreme of that because any deviation from that extreme would've caused the kind of crisis that we're in now. Then I mean, of course it's heavy-handed. I suppose that's why it's reality is very heavy-handed because it's all been sort of had it turned up to 11 since 2008.

Yeah. Yeah. It's been cramped and now you do get the feeling of you are just living in the aftermath of the blast radius of 2008. Like finally, sort of the, the explosion has reached its terminal limit. And you're just wandering around being like, oh, this is how this is how it is now. Yeah.

Riley: Absolutely. It is an absolute I mean, I can't I really can't get over the explosive population in an unhoused people creating shanty towns surrounded with just like someone who just did a roll of the dice. And then it caused lots of other rolls of the dice as well. Which is just fantastic.