

Shit We Don't Talk About Podcast
Episode 79
Corbin Knight-Dixon
Far-Right Fairy Tales

Mia Voss

Hey. Welcome to the latest episode of Shit We Don't Talk About. The podcast that takes on topics that need more open and honest discussion. Which means some of these topics are triggering. So please take care when listening. And I'll always give you a trigger warning. For instance, here's one: Every episode contains swear words. You've been warned! Make sure to check out the show notes which include an accessibility transcript of the podcast and all of the links for our guests at ShitWeDontTalkAboutPodcast.com.

Mia Voss

Welcome to Episode 79 of shit we don't talk about my guest is Corbin Knight Dixon. Yes, he's back. Corbin is a sexuality educator, learning coach and advocate and in this episode, we dive into the topic of far right fairytales the manufactured culture war on education, trans rights critical race theory, sex education and so much more. Tune in it gets good here we go

Mia Voss

Corbin. He's back ladies and gentlemen.

Mia Voss

Whenever I really want to learn and also be outraged I called Corbin.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Yes, well, it's a knowledgeable outrage, which I appreciate and we have a lot to dish on. We had to choose through many topics this time, but I love this topic far right fairy tales. Thank you for coming up with that spiffy title. But before we get too far into it, let's do identifiers. I'm me of us. I'm a blonde used to be natural blonde. WOMAN IN MY 50s White wearing dark glasses slicked back hair because my hair is dirty and a blue shirt. What do you look like? Yeah, my name is Corbin Knight-Dixon, I am a white masculine person with dark brown here, I guess dark brown here glasses. And sitting here in my apartment in Buffalo

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Mia Voss

Exactly. And I'm in Denver. So here we go! All right. So tell us about you real quick, because you've been on my podcast several times, we started actually with sex in the time of COVID. So that's a little dusty, although the principles that we discussed are, you know, never go out of style. But tell us about your history to it. Your background.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Shit We Don't Talk About Podcast
Episode 79
Corbin Knight-Dixon
Far-Right Fairy Tales

So I started in the field of sexuality, education and anti violence when I was 15 years old. So I started as a survivor of sexual violence, someone that came from a generational and intergenerational family that experienced sexual violence and quickly got involved as an advocate and an educator at Planned Parenthood. And really quickly in the first couple of years of being a teen, I think that my my interest and my just madness, as you were saying at the beginning, I think catapulted me into some spaces of having uncomfortable conversations really early on. I'm 33. Now so this has been 18 years of doing this work, having conversations around sexuality, sexual health, sexual violence, anti racism, really light topics. And even as a teenager I was one of my first big things I remember and goes to what we're talking about today was doing a media interview and a local TV station about Purity Balls, and Purity Balls are those put a ring on your finger abstinence only pledged to your father that you're going to save your virginity you have to see me laughing at the irony of Purity Balls.

Mia Voss

The 12 year old of me is like "Purity Balls".

Mia Voss

And was that in Champaign, where we grew up, I we can say where we're from, right where Corbin's mom and I went to high school together. So we go, you know, to the way back, he and I, but, so that was in Champaign, Illinois. Interesting. So it is a college town. So it's interesting. It's an interesting way for us to grow up of it being, you know, this farm town, but also a college town and having a lot of different elements to it.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Well, and I've done this work across the country now, I mean, Champaign Urbana, I think of as a progressive place as a college town, but they're not devoid of their challenges and attacks to education. I'm from Texas, certainly. And we'll talk about ways that they're not devoid and are directly contributing to attacks on education. And then for the last 10 years, I was doing education work in New York City where you would think surely we have progressive policies and education curriculum and initiatives. And yet we find that students get really different experiences when they're talking about topics like sexuality education, talking about critical race theory talking about inclusion of transgender folks, queer and LGBTQ plus students. It's really an individual experience where it shouldn't be our young people should be protected.

Mia Voss

It should be across the board. So I'm guessing as well, that it has to do with I mean, everything from how much money the comes from the family, the family comes with two gender, race, age, what the, you know, the parents background is so forth.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I think family, you know, I think that we talk a lot and the education system. And I think, where we get some hang ups where we hear these words that are intended to provoke response, they know that talking about transgender issues is going to provoke response from people

that don't know about it, because they haven't met someone in their life who is transgender, gender non conforming, non binary, there might be communities where they haven't met many folks who are people of color, who are who might identify as black or brown. And so there is this concerted effort to talk about divisive topics, and use those as a central point to build a base. And I think that's what we want to get to talking about. And understanding when we think about shit we don't talk about is really this intentional provocation of cultural issues, to attack the education system and to make people feel like we have different values than we actually do. When I talk to people about education. We agree on a lot, that we want our young people to be educated that we want them to, to thrive, that that we want them to have the tools to exist as adults in the world or to thrive as young people. I mean, like when you think if you were to have a conversation with people that we could agree if you were on a plane, that we could agree on some of those baseline points that we want our young people to thrive, and we want them to understand what it's like to navigate the world as an adult. I think that that's a pretty baseline agreement that we can come to.

Mia Voss

I do. And let's also be clear, you and I both don't have children. No, I mean, so the see the irony in this, but but where we have a vested interest in in this and me now being, you know, close to 60, I'm kind of like, well, I'll be shuffling off the mortal coil here soon, not worrying as much, you know, the polar bears, drowning, and so forth. But yes, I think that is a, for lack of a better idea of it like a Maslow's hierarchy kind of thing. You add that in of wanting to have your children educated and given the information. But I would say fear mongering has got to be one of the biggest things that goes along with any of these divisive topics that you know what the far right fairy tales, and I love your title of it, too. What did we say? Manufactured?

Corbin Knight-Dixon

We said manufacture culture wars on education. And it's because it is made up, it's constructed. And so I often it's thanks to training, I've gotten mentorship and guidance from people who have been doing this far longer than I have, you know, I really love turning to our thinkers and racial justice and reproductive justice, who bring up the ancestors to have social justice and calling to them. But just noting that this has been manufactured and created, and and done so intentionally to oppress, to make people feel less than to give them less power and control. And you know, I teach about sexual violence. And it's no mistake, when I think about you said, fear mongering. When you look at the strategies of interpersonal violence, they map up so well, with what we see happening, culturally, cultural isolation, just like you would see in an intimate partner relationship, right? Where a partner is isolated from someone, aren't we seeing that happening more broadly, where there's intentional efforts to make people feel isolated, like I'm so different than the person, my neighbor or someone next to me because they have a different ideology?

Mia Voss

The silo-ing is, has been and I feel like I mentioned it in almost every podcast because there's an element to that of any of our cultural problems. And I didn't mention this before we got started. But I was I was thinking about this. We watched cabaret a couple weeks ago, Christopher, his kids were

involved in in theater, and he said, Have you been ever seen? I said no. And it's so funny. I mean, it's a huge thing. And when all these Academy Awards and I think it was 1972 So so interesting, Joel Gray, Liza Minnelli, young Michael, me, they were all young Michael York. And so I watched it the other day, and just blew my pants off of like, it's 1931 Germany, and I just went Oh my fucking god. This is just it's just, it's just repeated and there's the scene where this kid is wearing the Nazi youth. So it's still again, not 1931 Germany so Hitler hasn't even come into power but they're starting to have you know, these, these. Really, I think for lack of Have a word thugs like walking around and harassing people. And so this kid shows up at this. They're at this beautiful picnic in the country. And, you know, there's a lot of older people too. And as you start standing up and singing fatherland, and you just watch this, this palpable, like first kind of disgust and derision, and the old people are like, I missed the Kaiser kind of thing, too. Slowly, everybody starts singing because they're, they're pooling together and feeling like flyover states felt, for instance, which got, you know, Trump into into office. And so it just anyway, I just wanted to pull that out there that it just was so like, we're so close to the 1930s. Germany, I don't know if that's being to fear mongering or tell me your thoughts on that. And then we'll dive further into this.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Yeah, I mean, I think that there's not a person I've talked to that have shared a lot of our values around what's happening and seeing clearly what's happening, who haven't had reflections on some of their own cultural moments. And like, What the What the hell and like how, you know, my mom and I were talking about the movie, The Birdcage, which is a movie I was I was raised on, I mean, yeah, growing up, and and we could certainly critique it and pull it apart now. Right? And that even media like that is something that would be considered by some of the current laws and standards of some of these far right politicians as inappropriate, when really they were messages about love inclusion and expanding our under understanding of who people are and how different families look. So certainly, I think that there is some concern that some concern, extreme concern and saying, you know, these have been tactics for a long time. But it's not new. It's not new. But I think that there is a lot of understandable fear about its escalation. And seeing how much like I said, I've been doing this for 18 years now. And I've always talked about abstinence only education and the pro life movement and their strategies, but the escalation that we're seeing, especially around anti CRT critical race theory, and alternatives to public education, alternatives, and big ass quotes, and then the attacks that we're seeing done against our, our trans friends and family and young people that we care about deeply in the LGBTQ plus community. It's escalating, and it's something that we have to address.

Mia Voss

Alright, so dive in further, because I know you know, one thing we said just at the very beginning, and we're talking everything, it's anti trans anti sex education, it's, you know, again, this alternative thing, it's all weaves together. It's it's quite grisly.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Yeah, well, I want people to understand and get a better framework for who are the backers? And where did this come from? Because I think a lot of us have been paying more attention since Trump

Shit We Don't Talk About Podcast
Episode 79
Corbin Knight-Dixon
Far-Right Fairy Tales

was elected right in 2016. And we started to see the impact on some of his really terrible policies immediately, but in the education world, especially in 2020.

Mia Voss

Can you specifically name some of those just to remind us of that, to what what some of the because there's so much out there, we are overwhelmed. So if you'll remind me as to what some of those were.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

I mean, almost immediately, he passed executive orders banning various diversity trainings from federal offices. Because diversity is a bad thing, right? They don't want us to be talking about or thinking about. So they banned those types of trainings that really supported bureaucrats which I say it as sarcastically as possible, and with some love as someone that works with bureaucrats, not notoriously like progressive or cutting edge in terms of inclusion and diversity. And so eliminating those types of programs that support them and thinking about how are we more inclusive and supportive of the different cultures and diversity of Americans and people that exist in the world is, is telling. And so that was some of the first measures that he took were executive orders. And then we saw things like firing of principals in Texas, for example, if people will remember in 2020, the first firing of a prominent principal, who said racism is alive and well. Do you remember that, that being so controversial to acknowledge that racism is alive and well in March 2022, thanks to efforts based on the Trump campaign, and then the emergence that we're seeing other politicians like DeSantis and Marjorie Taylor Green, Florida passed its don't say gay bill and March of 2022, and was the first of many and now we're just seeing a snowball effect of moral bills, more legislation that are further targeted for targeting black and brown young people. And more recently, in particular, LGBTQ plus youth and make no mistake that that intersection, that's where people feel the most pain that's where we see the most marginalization and in the most intentional acts of state and interpersonal harm,

Mia Voss

Ugh, those words strung together. And I will stop for a second and just say a call out immediate call to action is just start looking just in your own state. What are look at all just look up HBs House bills, see what's coming through staples, any category mean, just start getting educated. It's sneaky. And I know you'll probably touch on this, but it certainly starts with school boards. Yeah. Anyway, continue

Corbin Knight-Dixon

School board. Yeah, it's huge. And it relates to the overall tapestry of understanding where this came from. Because I think that some folks think this just came out of the Trump administration. And I want to just step back, because it's important to understand that nothing just comes out of nowhere. The attack on sex education and LGBTQ plus inclusion dates back, you know, pretty far. And when you think about anti sex ed and LGBTQ groups, think about the Koch brothers. Think about the Walton Family Foundation, the DeVos good old Betsy DeVos,

Mia Voss

Oh that bitch, sorry. That just came out.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Usually, and ironically, words family are integrated into many of these foundations Focus on the Family, Family Research Council, Alliance Defending Freedom, parents defending education, no left turn and education, American Federation for Children, those are relatively when you hear them benign sounding terms, or like they're protective, like there will be foundations or organizations in place to protect children. And ironically, these Focus on the Family, they're talking about specific families they're talking about, and we'll say it aloud, white Christian families and Christian and a very puritanical sense of how we've defined it within its racist roots. And what we've seen in western civilization in the United States in the history of racism and how it's been weaponized by Christian culture. I know that's something that is Yeah, go ahead.

Mia Voss

No, go ahead it's shit we don't talk about and come at us, bro. Because I like to say small "c" white Jesus Christians? Yeah, been my, my, you know, and I, if you take offense at that, then you might want to look in the mirror. Because you you know what I'm talking about. So Boy, that that list, does that list alone. And another call to action would be to look at these places and see where companies and corporations are giving money. Right? It's really I think Google is your friend when it comes to this. And I think it's very empowering to start saying, you know, what, phone company? What cable company? What, you know, what, where am I going? Am I going to Home Depot versus Lowe's. Am I going to Hobby Lobby versus whatever that alternative? Is that I just forgot? Yeah. Michael, Michael Michaels, as you say, it's a guy, his name is Jason, what's his name? Anyway? So we things like that. I think there's there's a lot of power that we can take small steps in it, but just knowing those names, isn't? And how insidious it is. And you're right. So you're, you're saying it's going back? Pretty far. And I agree.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

It's going back really far. And it's using that foundation, they and it is a well coordinated, very well funded, concerted effort from the wealthy, far right Christian movement. And so you know, just thinking a little bit about about history and thinking, I'm a human sexuality professor. And one of the things that is my biggest area that I talked about, is media and information literacy. And, you know, I don't care if it's a biology course, by code or a psychology course, I am teaching media and information literacy. Damn it. It's important. And so I make my students look about controversial or maybe divisive topics like abortion and look at the sources and what is focused on the family say about abortion or crisis pregnancy centers, compare it to a another take or another agency. And then we can talk about what's really objective here, and where might bias be so I think that that's important that that investigation and there's so much in terms of what we see on our social media and the algorithms of what spit out at us. Tick tock it's something that I'm a tick tock fan as a follower and as a learner, but I also have to be a hard question or about the source and ask myself is this objective and I'm getting this from a reputable and reliable source of information.

Mia Voss

And I mean, we even had this week which is going to date this podcast just slightly that you know, the death of the blue tick the blue mark on Twitter. So now it specifically will not say as of this This date, which is, I don't know, April 4 2023, that it's not going to specifically say whether it's a legitimized tick that it was a legacy person, or if you just paid for it. I mean, that's going to make your job a lot harder on what what you're looking to teach to people, because it's not going to be out, you won't be able to say, this was, you know, verified account meaning it says it's from this new source, and you know, exactly who this person has. Yeah. Well, the action is watching, watching all the spelling, and anything that you follow on Twitter, I'm still Twitter fan, you're gonna have to pry it out of my cold, dead, irritated hands, until it really goes over the edge, because I still am able to see the things that I want, but I think verifying it, and I know that's what you teach and preach as well.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Yeah. Well, and I think going back to your cabaret, and is this Nazism rebranded? And it is I mean, you know, one of the tenants of fascism is delegitimizing facts and our public institutions that people turn to for that certainty, you know, when we feel uncertain, or uncertain as people we like to turn to sources that we can trust. But the far right and the Trump followers and these MAGA Republicans, what they're doing is they're attacking institutions in a way to legitimize them so that there can be no turning to the CDC, there can be no turning to the Office of Adolescent Health, there can be no turning to I had someone challenged me on talking about the United Nations and the World Health Organization, as using some definitions and terminology as standards for equity and health care and supporting people across the world. And it was a moment of are we actually here debating, and we can talk about the politics, we can talk about the micros of it, but that wasn't the argument that this person was presenting, they were talking about delegitimizing an institution that is had a proven record and have arguments that I think are legitimate, at least for public discourse.

Mia Voss

Wow. And that that is, you know, frightening. And I want to, I want to clarify, it's not that I'm going to stick with Twitter, because because I want to support him. But I love to view it just like how you're feeling with tick tock as well, too, is is verifying it, and, and the viewing of it as well, too. But, you know, let's just add in here, too, if we're going to be talking about Focus on the Family, and protecting children and so forth, we do, you might or might not know what what the numbers are of our infant, our mother and infant mortality rate here in in the States is is just dismal. And I mean, depends on what state it is. Some are obviously worse than others. But my God, I mean, this is a country where we can provide health care. And you know, women especially that in the numbers obviously increase with black and brown infant and Mother mortality rate. But it's just, it's incredible. All this efforts, it's worth putting into protecting from something that just this threat doesn't exist.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

It doesn't exist, which is why I love this idea of fairy tales. Yeah, because talking about the story that's actually not there. You know, and this actually stems from I was mentioning, a teacher of mine who said, the moral of the Senator's Mistress will always have access to abortion. And and talked about the the myth of stories of people who have abortions, and what those myths are these made up, made up

Shit We Don't Talk About Podcast
Episode 79
Corbin Knight-Dixon
Far-Right Fairy Tales

stories of these very extreme and faible lies, ideas of what these stories look like. And I think going back to sex, Ed, that sex education, comprehensive, medically accurate sex education is actually extremely popular. I don't know, what would you guess in terms of percentage of parents who said, You know what, comprehensive sex education is important. out of 100%? How many would you say?

Mia Voss

First of all, I would say that they would love it, because if they're not really emotionally intelligent, it takes the work off their hands. Yeah. For one, and I would I would go, I'm gonna say 80%. It's 90%. Holy shit. See? Ya. And I thought that I was estimating high. That's incredible. And this is across the board, right?

Corbin Knight-Dixon

This is across the country. When you sect or dissected by issue, you'll see some variations, but overall 90% I mean, like, fine 90% of US citizens to agree on anything, like in a Gallup poll are and you know, like, fine, 90% of people do agree on what flavor of ice cream is better. Right? I mean, so we're talking about sexuality education, and this is why I think the history of sex education, you know, starting in the 70s is really when we saw sexual liberation and people getting more uncomfortable with topics like we weren't just talking about pregnancy prevention. We were now talking about Roe v. Wade passed in 1973. We had birth control pills starting in the 60s. So Having sex and sexuality was no longer about birds and bees and making a baby. We were talking about sexual freedom and sexual liberation choice really brought down this Christian concerted effort where the topic of abortion used to not be a hot button issue. And the

Mia Voss

fact that Yeah, can you can you dive into that for a second? And I will say, before you do that I want to acknowledge to when, when we talked about the attacks on this is also age old attacks on intelligencia. And intelligence or education has always been the first sign of what you know what's to come? Because I mean, if you start I mean, they would start with people wearing glasses back 100 years ago. I know, I was saying that the other day even. I believe this was a tactic of the Khmer Rouge as well, like they always start with the educated, the professors, the teachers and so forth to go after a society to undermine it.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Yeah, no, it definitely has always been been a strategy and not really until Yeah, tactic and didn't really surge again, and kind of like the formal platform of Christianity until after Roe v. Wade.

Mia Voss

And so in that was a political football.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Yeah. 100%. And it's something that was understood and agreed upon among the base as a charged and popular political topic. I've been talking about abortion, like I said, for a long time, I'm sure that

Shit We Don't Talk About Podcast
Episode 79
Corbin Knight-Dixon
Far-Right Fairy Tales

you've been talking about abortion with people for a long time. And, and if you have these conversations, you know, that people have really divided opinions and different opinions. And one that as an educator, and this is where I get pissed is that as an educator, I don't teach values. I help you think about, I help you think about your own.

Mia Voss

Oh, my God, I could just stop it right now. Like you just stop the podcast right now. That's just amazing. You don't teach values you help people acknowledge their own or find their own? Oh, shit. That's amazing. I mean, more that

Corbin Knight-Dixon

we would I would, educators are still doing these activities with their students where you ask questions about, you know, is abortion Okay, under any circumstance, want to agree or disagree? And then you hear the spectrum of ideas and thoughts, and some people saying, yeah, absolutely any circumstance, every circumstance, and someone else saying, Well, only instances of sexual violence and someone else saying, well, depending on someone's cultural or religious beliefs, and then we get to Oh, wow, there's a lot of opinions here. And then we're

Mia Voss

at what age are we talking about? Okay.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

High school students, college students. I mean, I think that you always are adapting as an educator to be what's developmentally appropriate, and thinking about what is happening to people's bodies and minds at that time. And not prescribing some difference, made up ethics to think about, do we talk about, you know, when you talk to people about sex education for kindergarteners, or grade schoolers, they go, Oh, you're going to talk about sexual behavior, or a penis and vagina or penis and anus stuff. And it's like, in kindergarten curriculum, we're talking about how families are different. We're talking about what are your private middle parts or parts that only a doctor would touch with permission. And that's where the fairy tales come in. And you see it in interviews, if you go back to this is again, what maddens me going back to interviews from when I started, kind of like more professionally in 2011, I would see interviews of people talking about, oh, and you're teaching condom use to kindergarteners? No, they are not! Absolutely or not. And whoever is making up that myth, I wish that they would point out the educator who has figured out an age appropriate way to talk about condom usage to me is that

Mia Voss

did you crack the code? Great to know, right? outcomes. And, I mean, they're in they're on par also with that, you know, fabulous term, late term abortion. And let me just rant for a second. I mean, In what world is a woman just changing her mind and about eight and a half months, and saying, I'm cool. Now. I'm good. I'm good. I just went through all this and I just don't want to have it anymore. And I know just even as if I believe yesterday, they are banding about more terms. And I don't know if it's Lauren Boebert or Marjorie Taylor Greene or someone that's that's doing a lot of fear tactics about this. And I

Shit We Don't Talk About Podcast
Episode 79
Corbin Knight-Dixon
Far-Right Fairy Tales

do trigger warning, obviously, I'm going to put a trigger warning at the beginning of this podcast anyway with some of our terms. But you know, saying that these you know, children are being aborted and are still alive and then they're killing them on the two I mean, just shit like, this is what you're talking about. This is that same indoctrination.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

And it's and they're, again, made up stories

Mia Voss

and made up story. It's Fairy Tales, the worst kind

Corbin Knight-Dixon

fairy tales are the one example that they get from someone that's really looking forward to being featured. And I wanted to say Abby Lee Miller, but that's totally not the person that's like some, some reality star person. But you know, they get these folks that worked at Planned Parenthood that are willing to maybe had a bad experience and are willing to join a far right movement to talk about stories and exaggerate and are funded to do so. And sometimes they have legitimate complaints. I think that our systems aren't deserving of critique, we have to critique them to be bias into miss inform the public about what is being done. It's been happening for a long, long time.

Mia Voss

I agree. And I, it's so interesting to have, and I think it is there's there's a glorification of that, to me, people are, you know, guaranteed because of, you know, reality star wasn't too far off on that a, a glorified, you know, position of, you know, being somebody who's, you know, Cage rattler or saying, you know, this happened to me, and it's, it's definitely it's definitely so interesting in that world two, it's in frightening. Yeah.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Well, and I want to tie in some other because it's important for me, as an educator and us in our conversations to also be intersectional, about the ways that we're having these conversations, because again, we're talking about critical race theory. So we're talking about attacks on our black and brown community members, friends and family. We're talking about don't say gay and don't say trans bills, which are attacking their LGBTQ plus communities. And we're talking about attacks on education, public education, and public health, which overwhelmingly are supporting the folks that are most marginalized and most at the margins. And so this is intentional, we're not talking about issues that are impacting rich, white wealthy folks who are cisgender, you know, that are the maddest.

Mia Voss

They are the angriest. I can tell you that. And I bet that is such a great point. Thank you for that and keep going. Yes, it's just I had to just pipe in there for a second.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Yeah. So just I think tying in and remembering that this is intentional and seeing the over cross, seeing the overcrossing. You know, I wrote in my notes, just a reminder that so much of this history also comes from the AIDS movement. And remembering that attacks on LGBTQ plus, society, culture and friends and family is not new. Right. So sexual liberation, we talked about with Roe v. Wade, but it also ties into our queer and bipoc folks who went through the AIDS crisis at a time that Ronald Reagan and the President of the United States was trying to hide facts to misinform, and to keep information from the public. People remember, they remember that in those memories, they're trauma reminders for people as being the environment.

Mia Voss

And I'll pop in here to when I was thinking about that, because, you know, for, for me, I was I was born in 65. And so kind of coming of my own sexual, you know, real, you know, hit the ground running sexuality in the in the early 80s. And was, you know, literally just ushered into that along with with the fear that started I believe it was, you know, 80 to 83. And I went back and watched pose again, and it just was such a, such a very visceral reminder of, of that fear, and then that that dialogue, and then you know, that that actually led to so many people not being treated, because it was just considered, you know, gay cancer. Remember those words?

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Oh, yeah. I mean, first of all, like by grid, yeah. And this was a gay disease. So, no, this this history is important. And what's most important is our, our empathy bone, and asking, what is what are our young people in this country experiencing as they see this news, these policies, I think about my friends and colleagues who are educators, educators who are asking questions, and this is work that I've done in the past to support having more expansive ideas of how we educate, connect with young people, where we would say things like trying to get policies on on the books of you don't have to hide who you are to your students. I might not might not disclose and shouldn't disclose personal details about intimate parts of my life. Right. I shouldn't talk about stories, but is it inappropriate for a teacher to say that this is a picture of my husband or is this is it inappropriate for me to say, when talking about something or for someone to say that they identify as black, or that they identify or identify as queer. That's who I am. And so we're telling people to hide or suppress who they are. Yeah, it's backwards, because we were working to try and get policies about, it's okay to talk about who you are, but maybe not what you do. That's where we start to get into questions about, is this disclosure appropriate? Are we getting too into the weeds, and I wish that those were the conversations that we were having instead,

Mia Voss

oh, I wish that was our problem, right of the doubt, the, you know, the delicacies of, you know, a delicate nature of that, where, where the purpose is, higher education and protecting them, not this made up version of higher education and protecting them. And, you know, I did see something this week to regarding, you know, the fear of colleges of what it's going to start looking like for, you know, colleges in different states. I mean, it's, it's gonna it's politicized already of southern colleges versus northern or Western a Western colleges, and the rolling back of any kind of policies that protect students are then also being able to, you know, have access to health care, and abortion, you know,

Corbin Knight-Dixon

well, and they, they claim, this objectivity, that these measures have rolling back, different degree programs, different fields of study, that this is washing away subjectivity from academics, and educational rigor. And we know that that's bullshit. We know that that's bullshit. And when I talk about, again, human sexuality I teach, one of my classes is all about different theoretical approaches to the topic, that we can talk about sexuality, from an evolutionary standpoint, that we can take a feminist theory approach to looking at human sexuality, that we can look at medical based model approaches to human sexuality, there's different ways that we can have conversations about complex topics, the difference is that we are trying to expand them trying to broaden these topics so that people understand them better. And more importantly, and I think the bigger threat, that they see the undercurrent of the systems that made them so this is the attack on critical race theory, they are scared of us having frank conversations about the systems and structures that allow racism to exist.

Mia Voss

That's deep. That got me and then when you're saying that, too, it really does put the put the the fear into me, and not a fear mongering kind of fear. But, you know, that will propel me to stay awake of it and aware of it too, because that's the more we do go to sleep. And we're not even even going to start on the topic of work, because I'm so fucking sick of how weaponized that has become to it's just it, and I have I, you know, part of my work that I do is having private conversations with my white friends, you may not know about it, but it'd be like, Oh, don't Honey, don't see that or honey, you know, pay attention to what that is. And using woke is not something that you should be doing. You're actually now also a culturally appropriating what was, you know, a term and it can actually, let's talk about it just for a little bit, what is your, you know, what, what could be some good education for people as far as how to answer and how to approach that term of woke? It is so weaponized,

Corbin Knight-Dixon

it is weaponized. And I think you brought up one of the important points is that this is a term that is rooted in black culture, and, and talking about liberated information and access to understanding of, of important topics, and that you would get woke that you will be aware of something. Its roots are in social progressiveness and understanding it's a really deep word. And so when I see assholes, like Bill Maher go on and on about how terrible weaknesses not only do I find it, counterproductive to our movement and the work that we're trying to do and liberatory education, I also find it racist, and as a dog whistle to attack. Black Feminist in particular theory, which is one of the most important bases as I would say in this as Corbin as an educational philosopher, is one of the most important foundations of understanding education is turning to black feminism, turning to Audrey Lorde, turning to Bell Hooks, those were the thinkers who taught us how to talk about learning communities. And so in a way that they're trying to Legion Legion or delegitimize those conversations and spaces as well, by going to what simple what's simpler than a four letter word and saying, Oh, this will bullshit. It's a really quick way for people to try and attack an argument and it's become so emotionally charged that it's become a non starter. And it's

Mia Voss

not just far right. I have to tell you, that's why I mentioned that as far as having conversations with friends that I find to be in my general neighborhood. And then I'm like, fuck, you know, and I really mean, it's made me really double down on educating and, and just being like, you got to think about what that is. And that's more the more, you know, getting more into the deeper education to of not seeing these things, you know, the famous Oh, I don't see color, which is what a lot of helpful white people think, is a great thing to say. I think that's all it has been on its way out. However, I do feel like, it's such a great piece of advice. And then even you know, adding in newer ones, Nicole Hannah Jones with 1619 project, which is really, I think, a pretty big piece of what probably got people pretty upset about critical race theory. Yeah. And she take a rash of shit. She's been a writer for a long time, just like now you're mad at this, okay? Make that make sense?

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Well, and I would also argue that even that is its lineage is from the far right movement of false narratives of what Kancil culture and accountability look like. And, and they are simply and again, this is Corbin individual hat person who has been doing this a while. not associated with any organization. It's a fable. It's a fable of this idea of what does it mean to be canceled? Folks like Louie CK are still touring. R. Kelly is still making music behind bars. I have my thoughts about I'm a prison abolitionist. So I have my thoughts around what reform what accountability looks like. But if we're actually thinking about what the the consequences of misgendering someone, I have tons of trans friends, colleagues, I have misgendered, I've accidentally use the wrong pronouns. I have never been publicly diminished, cancelled. I've gotten friendly, and sometimes not so friendly. Like, Hey, that's not the right thing, or let me correct you and using something. And I've simply been able to say like, I'm sorry, and change behavior and move on.

Mia Voss

So there's this involved. Thank you for the information. Yeah, there's this

Corbin Knight-Dixon

false idea of what being held accountable means. And I think that that is also a far right fable, that there's this idea that you're going to be kicked off of a college campus, because you have a maybe divergent opinion about something. And that's just simply not the case. And I think the few examples that we see of them are turned into these celebrity stories that people cling to, and they use those as the rare examples that definitely do not fit. The typical experience that most people have,

Mia Voss

which are probably have inflated facts as well. Yeah, I like that inflated facts. I think, Kelly, what's her name? She said, alternative facts. inflated facts is now my new favorite.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Yeah, but you're right, you're right, that it does come from that you're hearing this being parroted from folks who might describe themselves as liberal or progressive. But I would argue that it's coming from a false narrative from the right about what Kancil culture quote unquote, actually looks like.

Mia Voss

And I always I always loved to say it, nothing, nothing is more outraged than an inconvenience white male, that is being held accountable. I mean, you I just, I just see, oh, cabins face in my head has his you know, his all talking about all the beer he likes to drink and all that, you know, him actually having to answer for a behavior that was accountability? Not not, you know, the witch hunt, as they will have to Bandy about as well, too.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

And what's wild and then I'll get off soapboxes, or maybe, but well, please. What's what's wild is that there's this idea that with all of these CRT anti-sex ed, pro LGBTQ plus public education, that it separates, separates those who are marginalized from, like the language that people use are like dominant groups like white dominant culture, cisgender, dominant culture. And that's not what these curriculum and initiatives aim to do. They aim to bring about understanding awareness and create space for conversation so that people bring down those divisions have an understanding for some root causes of some of the systems or the things that we see every day that we're like, What the hell is that about? Why does this dynamic exist? So it actually brings people together in a way that I don't think that people fully understand. And they think that conversations about racism and US history, for example, are gonna be like these admonishing lessons that just have finger wags at white children that tell them all the ways that they should be held responsible for racism. And that's a feeble. And I don't think that we can still have tough conversations and people getting around to understanding that tough conversations aren't the same as as shame Guilt is not the same as shame, and having guilt about what maybe you've done in terms of your behavior or what your ancestors done, have done in terms of what their legacies are, are not the same as inherent shame and feeling bad for who you innately are.

Mia Voss

And from your lips to everyone's ears, I'm going to leave it at that. Let's go with a couple more strategies. Before we get out of here. I love to have action items for people too, because we've we've popped in a lot of information. And honestly, what that last soliloquy, I'll say that you just went on, it's just the perfect way to describe it. So give us some more action items. And we're going to have a lot of links in the show notes, I'm going to link all the different names that you mentioned, initially the shitty team and also some of our favorite black female content creators that we love that and then who they also find to be very encouraging. And I would really, really encourage you to to follow them and change the algorithm of your feed. Honestly. Yeah, I would say different people.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

I think that those are great starters, I would say, it's important to also get an understanding for people that are listening and heads nodding and saying I agree or I agree, getting a better understanding about where the disagreements are and where the tensions are. And so I do encourage people to get an idea

Shit We Don't Talk About Podcast
Episode 79
Corbin Knight-Dixon
Far-Right Fairy Tales

of what's the platform of Focus on the Family, what are things that they're sharing, I think one of the things that is most important that you've already mentioned, are talking to your close, people start talking to your networks, and having conversations because more and more every month, I feel like I keep turning back to we have to do more intimate community work. And that means the people that are in your top five, maybe your pods of top 10 to 15 people that might be acquaintances, but those include the people that you might have to have tough conversations with. I think researching school boards is something that is going to be increasingly important and follow the breadcrumbs. A lot of the folks that I mentioned at the top, the attacks that we're seeing on Instagram, or Tiktok, or YouTube have these really wild school board meetings, I'm sure that you've seen them and others have seen them. A lot of the coordination of those attacks are not from local people. The coordination is actually happening from National Movements who are feeding talking points, and sometimes placing people who are not from that community, to be the voice and dissenting opinion, to talk very using, like I said, all the talking points, all the major things that they want mentioned. So actually researching who's on my school board, when you see a community board with the minutes looking up those names and seeing for the people that were anti CRT or anti some of the books that are related to Rosa Parks are related to other historical pieces that are so important for our young people to have access to, who are those names and trace the actual story? And I bet that there's some linkage that you see connected to some of the folks we mentioned earlier.

Mia Voss

Oh, God, those are amazing points. And I'm going to post a link in the show notes as well, too. We were talking about before we started. Fred Frederick Joseph Sir Fred T. Joseph. And he did an amazing Instagram reel about how much it costs a school board to to ban his book. It's not free folks. little FYI. Fuckin i It is not free. This is money that's being used to be no book in your school. That could be good. That could go towards supplies, education, teacher salary. I give think on sit on that one.

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Yeah, yeah, credible. The last the last two things I would say are follow the ACLU, American Civil Liberties Union. That's a great place that you can continue to be in the know about just the political education, what's happening in the environment and political landscape and keep a pulse and you can get as specific as seeing more locally to what's happening. Based on where you live. I think some some things I would put out as red flags to check out for abstinence only education continues to be a red flag. I would think that we know that would know this by now. But I would add to that a rebrand that abstinence only educators have been trying to integrate into public discourse, which is a term called sexual risk avoidance programs, sexual risk avoidance or SARS. And they're it's a rebrand on abstinence only because abstinence only is extremely unpopular when you talk to the general public, but sexual risk avoidance if you rebranded it might be more palatable. So there are programs that are labeled sexual risk avoidance programs that I think should always raise an antenna or a red flag for someone that this needs a closer closer look and actually see who is the backer, who was the person funding that work and asked to see curriculum materials, you have every right to ask at least to ask to see what is being taught in your public education system, just like folks on the far right are doing, again, not always parents from the community. Oftentimes, these are people from fringe groups or, or

Shit We Don't Talk About Podcast
Episode 79
Corbin Knight-Dixon
Far-Right Fairy Tales

movements that are more national, but as to see what's being taught as to see what's in the curriculum, because in some cases, I would love for it to be this comprehensive, medically accurate information, which by the way, is not necessarily needed to be legal in all 50 states. When I was working in Illinois back in 2012, we were working to get an abstinence plus bill passed, that would make it so sex ed were medically accurate and 2012, 10 years ago. So asking and checking and looking are the facts, the figures, the quote unquote, peer review, I've seen educational materials that don't follow or they come from Focus on the Family, for example, as a source of information. That's not a reliable source. So really encouraging that kind of investigator hat for parents and concerned citizens who want to know what's happening in their communities. And there are people doing doing work already. So ACLU Planned Parenthood's, you don't have to do this alone, find PTAs, find, community groups that are already in existence, because recreating it or starting a whole new group often takes so much more effort and recognizing that there are already a lot of bones that likely exist, and in the neighborhood, or the community that you live in already. And it's, I think, pretty easy for people to see the connective tissue for how what we're talking about relate to, again, those universal values I mentioned at the top that we care about our kids, we care about our young people, we want them to do well. And they shouldn't be facing attacks based off of who they are, or who they love or what their skin color looks like.

Mia Voss

Thank you so so so much for that. And I'll end with you know, this is it, it is work to be empowered. But it's beautiful work and you just gave some really great tips on that to that you don't have to do that alone. There's there's very few new things to champion that someone hasn't done some kind of work on too. I also really thank you for that pro tip. Just the tip about there being plants and these on that note the plants in the school boards. I think that's that's so So, so interesting and very informative. So all right, let's go with Do you have a new favorite swear word recently or anything feisty you want to share with us?

Corbin Knight-Dixon

It's just It's always fun, but I think it's right now it's "Fuck Shit Up" . And turn to young people. Look at what's happening in Nashville right now. Look at what young people fighting anti gun legislation and anti trans bills. I saw it in my neighborhood here in Buffalo, trans young people and allies standing on the corner with Honk if you support trans kids, and I honked as loud as I could. Fuck shit up, follow what young people are doing, listen to them and follow their example.

Mia Voss

Thank you for that because I said FTS because that's my favorite is fuck that shit. But I think more active is fuck Shit up. And I really need that. So thank you for that. Listen, if there's any of my podcasts that you need to go to the show notes. I'm going to say it again before we end up here at shit. We don't talk about podcast.com We're gonna have all these action items for you also, please go there and Corbin thank you for being on the show again, honey.

Shit We Don't Talk About Podcast
Episode 79
Corbin Knight-Dixon
Far-Right Fairy Tales

Corbin Knight-Dixon

Thanks for having me, Mia

Mia Voss

Hey, thanks for tuning in. You can check out the show notes and guests links at ShitWeDontTalkAboutPodcast.com If you liked this episode, please subscribe and give it a like or leave a review, especially if it's a good one. See you next time. Bye