SESSION 2: DOING THE BEST I CAN: THE CHANGING FACES OF POVERTY IN AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

MR. GOOD: Since it's right after the lunch hour, I wonder if we might need just a little lift. I was saying farewell to our [9 year-old] son Saturday night, and I told him, "you know, it's a big deal, this conference. There's a lot of important journalists and speakers gathering." And he said, "Well, just get your facts straight, and, you know, try to be funny." So, I thought that was interesting, and before we get going, I have one quick story for you. There's a Catholic parish just down the road called St. Patrick's, at 41st Street. And if memory serves, I'm told there was a long-time priest there, who was giving a homily, when a stranger who'd not been a regular part of the church came in, and stood up, kind of mid-sermon near the very back of the church, and right in the middle of talk he says loudly, "Use me, Lord. Use me," and he sits back down. And of course the priest wasn't used to this. So, he did the best he could to finish out his sermon, and as this fellow was leaving the church, the priest mentioned to him, he says, "You know, we've actually wanted to re-sand and refinish the pews in the church for quite some time. If you've got any time this week, we'd love to have your help." And the guy says, "Very well," and slips out, and a week goes by. The following Sunday, the pastor's back up in the pulpit preaching -- preaching again. And I kid you not, the same guy stands up mid-sermon, in the back corner he says, "Use me, Lord. Use me," and sits back down. And the priest is just dumbstruck. But he pushes through, finishes up, and as the guy's leaving the church that day, he says, "Listen, you know, we'd love to have some help around here -- we've also wanted to take down the wallpaper, in the narthex. Thanks for speaking up, but, well, come on." So another week goes by, and once again the guy doesn't show up. And the third and final Sunday, the priest is up in the pulpit and the middle of the sermon this same stranger stands up and says, "Use me, Lord. Use me, but only in an advisory capacity." (Laughter.) Of course, the great thing about today's panel with Kathy and Joe is that these two individuals are not just advisers. These are people who have been deep in the trenches and deep at work for many years. Kathy is a very talented social scientist and ethnographer, often story-based and always data-rich, as a result of getting to know her subjects for years -- some for nearly 20 years. She's taught at quite a

number of top universities, from Harvard to Princeton to Johns Hopkins and other places. We're so grateful that she can be with us, and there's a wonderful piece right called Up Close and Personal that Princeton's just published about her and Matt Desmond's approach to scholarship. I'd commend it to you if you're -- hopefully when you're -- stirred by what she'll share with us, and I'd note that she's published eight books and over 60 journal articles. Joe Jones has also been a long obedience in the same Direction, as a practitioner. His own life turned around dramatically in 1986 and he's worked with fathers and low-income families faithfully, thinking carefully about child support and ways to help the broader Baltimore community. I'm so grateful they can both be here, and would remind us all that today's hashtag is #FaithAngle. Please tweet prolifically, as you see fit. Kathy Edin, thank you for coming and the floor is yours.

KATHRYN EDIN

DR. EDIN: All right. First of all, great to do this with Joe. I think I'm not exaggerating when I say that he has -- he is number one on my list of the nation's best practitioners. So just honored to share the platform with him.

MR. JONES: Can I say one thing about Kathy in intro? So I still appreciate Kathy. A huge percentage of the folks who I work with in Baltimore are (justice involved) and Kathy to some degree reminds me of someone with a criminal background. She goes from university to university to university like she had an outstanding warrant.

DR. EDIN: Oh, that was good. That was good. But we are definitely mutual admirations. So this is a huge topic. And I think there are -- there are two things that have really changed among the poor in my view and I'm only gonna talk about one of them because I've been talking about the other for three years since my book for $2 a Day came out. And if I have to give another talk on -- on that topic I think I will expire. So it is true that one of the -- so but I'll just say about two minutes' worth of sentences on that theme. What has really changed over the last 20 years in poverty it would be a mistake to look at the poverty rate because what's changed with -- is what's happening within the poor. And the rising inequality within the poor I think is really the theme of the last 20 years. As our safety net has transformed from a need base to a work- base safety net so people who can manage to work full- time full year even albeit low-wage jobs can claim fairly generous tax credits at the end of

the year. And they're probably better off than they have been in recent memory. Whereas people who cannot manage to do that see a crumbling cash safety net that leaves them with nothing, no source of cash income. But you can read $2 a day. I have presentations all over YouTube for better or worse. The second thing that's really changed is a much longer trend. It's a 50-year trend. And it's a trend in changes in family structure. And these changes are a consequence of poverty and inequality, but they are also large enough now to be a cause. So I want to -- I want to talk about four things today. And the first is about the spread of single parenthood as a consequence and cause of poverty. And for that first theme I want to point out that we've known this for quite some time. We started studying in earnest I think with Gary Becker's 1992 book Treatise on the Family, Charles Murray explored this theory with his book Losing Ground, and William Julius Wilson with the Truly Disadvantaged. So all huge books. But when all the number crunching was done what we learned is these are -- these books all have variations of the standard economic model, okay, as their thesis by and large. Charles Murray says it was the wise in welfare, you know, making it easier to leave your husband behind and make welfare your husband. William Julius Wilson says it was decline of jobs. Gary Becker says it's the decline of specialization among spouses that makes marriage less economically rational. But when all the number crunching is done at best these three theories can only explain about 20 percent of the variance in the spread of single parenthood over time. Just a tiny portion and probably less if you really want to be skeptic as we as social sciences -- scientists try to be. In my book with Mary Kefalas Promises I Can Keep we used in-depth interviews with 165 women, repeated interviews and graphic observations over six years' time in Philadelphia and Camden, listened to their stories systematically and analyzing them. And what we found evidence for is what was really going on was that there was a rise in marital standards. What it meant to be married had changed and it affected everyone. You know, for the middle class it's the big wedding, right? The big wedding is back. But for the poor it meant that a poor but happy marriage was no longer sufficient. And indeed couples felt morally that they had to reach a certain bar in order to be worthy of marriage. So they -- they held marriage sacred, but they thought their own relationships were too sorry to meet the standard at least a present. And since then

empirical work with nationally representative surveys including the building strong families study. Many of you know that under multiple administrations we administered experiments in trying to get and keep people married. Joe was part of that. But if you look at this sample and you operationalize what it means to (inaudible), marriage binds us all, people who have already had children, right, but they're unmarried. For couples who subsequently after birth meet the marriage br- -- there's actually a two-thirds -- they're two-thirds more likely to marry. So I think it's a big, new idea. Every empirical test I've seen of the marriage bar has found evidence. But this marriage bar is really cultural, right. It's not purely economic. It's really about a cultural standard that has changed that has these very interesting consequences. So that's theme one. Each of these themes will be a little longer than the other. Theme two is the deinstitutionalization of family life. And that has really been concentrated in the bottom fifth, but also in the second fifth of the income distribution. And indeed this deinstitutionalization of family life almost all of the growth in recent years, really since 1990, has been in the second fifth of the income distribution. So what do I mean by this? Do I mean that people are less likely to go to mental institutions? No. I'm talking about a withdrawal, a retreat from the spousal role. We see that in our interviews with men as well as with women many aspire to marriage, but see it as almost too -- too much to hope for. These couples are strikingly lacking in hope and just for romance honestly. And maybe marriage is seen as even dangerous for the survival of a fragile couple. But paired with that has been a rising salience in the father role. So as men are retreating from the spousal role they're embracing in spades the father role. And our -- my book with Tim Nelson, Doing the Best I Can, focused on that bottom fifth. But my subsequent work with working class men has really seen this same pattern in this middle educated group of men who really see fathering now as a key source of meaning and identity. And we even argue in a piece that's about to come out in the Journal of Economic Perspectives I think the first ethnographic piece ever published in this economics journal -- it should be a lot of fun -- that it is perhaps the most salient role now for men in this first and second fifth of our economy because if we're right, right -- what people in my business do is we raise hypothesis and then the quantitative people test it. If we're right, the salience of work identities has really atrophied. And so

father -- in the narratives fatherhood takes up more room and has more emotional salience than any other theme. And I'm just gonna read you a few quotes because that's what I do. I'm gonna -- I'm gonna talk about Robert first. He was one of the most stable guys in our working class sample. He actually was married, he'd gone to Catholic Church his whole life, he had his kids in Catholic schools and then Catholic Sunday school, went to church with his -- with his family, but yet he was scared to recommend the institution of marriage to his friends. He said, "I've known so many people who've lived together for years, had kids together, things were great. They got married, six months later they're divorced. And I think that piece of paper changes the way people act." So this is just one illustration of this very strong theme that if you don't meet that marriage bar, marriage can actually dissolve your relationship because it's almost putting it up to too high of a standard. On the salience of children Brian tell us, "To be honest with you, being a father has taught me pure love." These are these big, burly, you know, working class guys talking like this. "I did -- I didn't know pure love with my ex-wife, but with my daughter you don't get anything better than that, you know what I mean?" Fred really illustrates another very strong theme in these fatherhood interviews. He again is a working class, middle educated man of these theme of generativity which you see all over these interviews. Probably not something you would have seen in interviews a generation ago. He says, "It's definitely great being a father. You just have a little person who looks up to you and is trying to emulate some of the stuff that you do. A child is someone you could help shape and form into a good person." And Bill's story in contrast illustrates what happens to these men then when they're relationships with their children are severed sometimes because there's gatekeeping going on because of the mother. Bill says, "She wants me completely out of their lives. She has completely slammed the door, made sure I can't do anything about it. It has destroyed me. It has destroyed me." And finally Brian illustrates how the kinds of fathers these men aspire to be are not the kind of fathers they were raised with. He says, "My father doesn't show emotions. Now don't get me wrong, he's a phenomenal father when it comes to supporting his family and doing what needs to be done to take care of us. He's always done that. But as far as showing emotion, giving us a hug he doesn't do that stuff." So, again, one example a very strong theme of providing is

not enough. Good fathers are there in an emotional sense. So that was theme two. Theme three is that our social policies are failing these fragile families. Now child support is the most -- is the only cultural institution we've invested as a society to solve the problem that in a world where an increasing number of poor and lower-income children are living apart from their fathers it solves the problem of how to get resources from a non-custodial parent into that child's home. We know that if a woman gets child support it can -- it can constitute a very high percentage of her income. If she's poor it can constitute up to 70 percent of her income. So we don't want to -- I'm not dissing child support here, but I will argue that it's broken. And you probably know that our child support system is two tiered. And because of the two-tiered system men at the bottom and second fifth of the income distribution are treated like second-class citizens because they are not married. They're most often not married to the mother. So when a child support order is set it is not set in family court as part of a divorce. It is often set by an administrative judge. And the child support statute prohibits any funds being spent on establishing parenting time agreements. So for those fathers parenting time is generally not adjudicated when child support is set except in Texas and Michigan. In almost all states maternal custody in these non-marital cases is a presumption. In 18 states courts are actually prohibited from granting unmarried fathers custody. And what this means is that fathers have little say over how their children are raised. Added to that -- and Joe could speak to this I think poignantly -- due to multiple-partner fertility the way the child support system works for when you have children by more than one partner and due to penalties for arrearages poor men can easily be assessed half of their income and up. And, of course, this is unsustainable and child support for those men becomes a debtor's prison. So I've written reams about this. I've worked on this with the Gates Foundation part- -- U.S. Partnership of Mobility from Poverty. But the assumption embedded in these institutional arrangements with regard to fathers is that, first of all, these low income men are only valuable as paychecks and not as parents. And as you saw from the quotes I read earlier, men are trying to claim, you know, a deeper more generative role with their children at the same time that the child support system is saying, hey, you can't get custody. And, by the way, we're not going to spend our money to ensure that you get any -- any parenting

time and we're gonna take 50 percent of your take-home pay. There's also an assumption that less advantaged fathers are less important to kids in general than important father -- than advantaged fathers. I am co-PI of a large national survey called the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Survey which has followed a cohort of parents who had babies in 1998 and 2000. We followed these families. Three -- four- fifths of them end married all the way now to age 19. And what we find is that an investment of even an hour of a father's time in middle childhood -- so this paper is hot off the press. It hasn't actually even been published. Even an hour on a monthly basis of a dad's time and whether that child feels emotionally close to his or her father has huge benefits in adolescence. So the fathers are making this investment in middle childhood and the payoff for internalizing behavior, externalizing behavior and delinquency is -- is striking. It explains about a quarter of the standard deviation of that effect which is among the biggest we see in the field. And the ef- -- the effects are especially large for children who experience -- who've been exposed to very high poverty neighborhoods. So it's those fathers in particular that are prophylactics if you will against externalizing, that's sort of a psychological state where you -- you know, you act out, and especially delinquency at age 15. So these dads are really important. They think they're important, but our child support policy does not treat them as if they're important. And finally faith is failing these fathers. So Andrew Cherwin and I, along with two co-authors, looked at sort of the social science version of all of these Pew opinion studies. It's called the General Social Survey. Many of you have probably used it. It's a nationally representative survey of all Americans beginning in 1972 repeated cross section survey. And what we did is we divided up church attendants at least monthly by education and we began looking since 1970 and then in every decade since. So strikingly -- so we've got sort of people with a high school degree or le- -- with less than a high school degree. That's our least educated group. Then we have people who are -- have a high school degree but no four-year college degree, and then people with a four- year college degree. So we're looking at them over time. And strikingly there's almost no difference in education in church attendance as recently as 1970. So you see about 55 to 60 percent of folks saying they go to church at least once a month. This could be any -- any faith religious service. But the rate has declined among that least

educated group by about 10 percentage points or 20 percent just since 1970, okay. So that's a fairly big fall. And it was -- fell more sharply between the 80s and 90s so it's been with us for a while. Then there's this middle educated group. So these are sort of the working class. This is the second fifth. And they've also seen a decline in about 10 percentage points since 1980, but the -- but the real decline has been since 2000. So you started seeing falling attendance in the 90s, but it's really been in the 2000s that this group has -- is -- has trailed off in terms of religious attendance. And the rate among the college educated also fell, but more recently and a significant gap remains. So the college educated are the most likely to go to church. So just to give you a little bit of flavor of this Ed says, "I pray to the God of my understanding. The God I learned about in Sunday school is a God with strings attached telling us how to live. That didn't work for me." So this -- this I'm not gonna submit to the authority of religious institutions, you know, I'm gonna sort of exhibit autonomy was very strong in our data. Jeremy illustrates sort of a flippancy toward religion. He says, "I treat church just like a treat my girlfriends. I stick around for a while, then I go onto the next one." Aaron, speaking of the Catholicism of which was raised says, "I mean, it's a beautiful religion. But I see some of the stuff they've done around the world. You know, here you've got priests drinking out of gold goblets while in the villages around them people are starving to death." So this strong sense of that the church has become an immoral force is something we see in our data. And Greg and David who comes next does speak directly to the priest abuse scandal. And I love the ambivalence in these quotes because you can see a strong tie to religion, but yet a -- a fear and a -- so he says, "I try to mold myself to be like Jesus even though he may or may not have existed. But then when that whole priest thing came out I became an agnostic." So he's currently as an agnostic who doubts whether, you know, or not Jesus exists. And he's trying to nonetheless mold himself after Jesus. David was molested by a priest and says, "Something happened to me when I was a kid that kind of set me in a tailspin so I gave up on all that shit." So there's this bitterness and there's even a sense that -- that religion is for weak people. For example, Donald says, "Spiritual people have been to hell. Religious people are afraid of hell. People like me who are spiritual have already been to hell and back." Donald is a former addict -- opioid addict. "You can't scare and addict. You

can't scare me with jail. You can't scare me with death. I'm not scared of anything. But it's religious people who are scared of everything. That's why they pray and need Jesus because they are afraid." So I just want to read one quote before I finish. And it's a quote from a French sociologist. One of the founders of our field writing a century ago. And he was writing about a similar shift to the one that we may be experiencing now. The shift from farm to factory from organ- -- mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity for my lab sociologist friend Abi (phonetic) there I'll through in the sociological terms. But I think this is really interesting and I think we heard it in -- we heard a little bit of it this morning that maybe it's time for new wineskins, right. Durkheim writes, "It has been rightly stated that morality is in the throes of an appalling crisis, but the remedy for the ill is nonetheless not to seek to revive traditions and practices that no longer correspond to present-day social conditions. Rather we need to introduce greater justice into their relationships by diminishing those external inequalities that the source of our" -- you know, so the sense from Durkheim that as is true with journalism, there may be a fundamental transformation of these core institutions ahead of us in ways that will bring back in some of these folks who have been left behind.

MR. GOOD: Thank you, Kathy. Just a reminder that we've got a list going and it's building as we speak. At least one of you are on it already so please feel free to get in as this stirs the -- stirs the conscious. Two are in, three are in. Good. So four are in. And with that, Joe Jones, take it away.

JOE JONES

MR. JONES: All right. Josh, thank you for the invite and to the Faith Angle Forum for inviting me down to a much warmer climate than Baltimore. I am always ecstatic when I am with Kathy. And for those who don't know, Kathy has been a friend, she's been a colleague, she's been a mentor. And so much of the work that we do in Baltimore at the center is informed by her body of work. And I will say something, she -- I guess it's implied in what she said. But, you know, during the time of the Clinton/Gore administration which I would consider to be the beginning of the modern day era of what we call the responsible fatherhood movement, the Clinton/Gore administration put a lot of effort in public philanthropy, collaborated with the executive branch and the Congress got involved in lifting up issues around practice, policy, and research around responsible fatherhood.

That continued under the -- the Bush administration, which actually lead to the first major dedicated public funding for responsible fatherhood. This continued and was built on by the Obama administration. And those grant investments have now kind of bled over to the Trump administration and we hope that work will continue going forward. But (inaudible) each one of those milestone points in our history today has been influenced by Kathy's work. And so if you don't know that, you know you have heard it from me and I stand behind it, all right. So let me -- let me jump to, you know, my remarks. So I was born and raised in Baltimore. Tomorrow my organization, the Center for Urban Families, we celebrate our 20th anniversary as a standalone non-profit. I founded the organization in 1999 with about eight staff and a budget of about $250,000. Today we have a staff of just under 50 and a $6.5 million budget. And we built a -- from the ground up-- a 32,000 square foot headquarters building in West Baltimore. And I'll come back to the geographic location of the building. And I do want to apologize in advance, because of our 20th anniversary celebration tomorrow, I have to leave immediately after our panel concludes. But having lived in Baltimore born to parents who were married, father and mother were both in school. Father became an educator, my mother became a nurse. I was an only child. They separated and divorced when I was about nine years old. They're both alive. They both still reside in Baltimore and to this day they've never had a conversation with me about the disintegration of their relationship. I just remember one day having been buffered from all the negativity happening in our neighborhood and loved by two adoring parents. My father who was ex-military packed his duffle bag. I don't know if there are any ex-military folks in here you know y'all never get rid of that duffle bag. And he -- he packed it, he left. I remember vividly watching him get into the car, pull away never to return. I was an altar boy at church. I was a Boy Scout and so I was a good kid. But we -- my mother and I moved from the projects to an area of West Baltimore where I literally did not know anybody. And the boundaries that had been established with my parents tag teaming raising their only child dissolved- -- I became exposed to things I had been buffered from before. And I had a lot of hurt and pain that I couldn't articulate. The man who I looked up to and loved unconditionally was no longer there and those boundaries -- you know, something about men, boys, we

cross boundaries. And if there's nobody to check us we stretch those boundaries even more. And so I went from this altar boy and Boy Scout to someone who -- I hadn't had sex, hadn't smoked marijuana, hadn't had a drink of alcohol. I went from none of that to picking up a hypodermic needle filled with heroin and injecting it in my arm at 13. And then for 17 years I was in love with that drug and in and out of the criminal justice system. I also had a son out of wedlock that I wasn't responsible for. And it's taken me quite a long time to go back and heal that relationship. I was fortunate enough in 1986 to go into a long-term residential drug treatment program. And to be honest with you I went into that drug treatment program to duck going to jail again. I was getting ready to go to jail for a long time and I figured by the time I went to court I wanted to have something in my arsenal to say to the judge give me another shot. Judge says, "Oh, nope. That's done. I sentence you to five years in the Department of Corrections," and then he paused. He said, "I'm gonna give you just one last shot." And I took advantage of that and haven't looked back since. I will tell you, though, that every criminal justice institution that I've been in up and down the East Coast I was always able to get a hypodermic needle and a drug of my choice. So the notion that we will incarcerate and lock folks up as a means to deal with an opioid or drug crisis is ridiculous and it will never work. And so -- and I'm a firm believer in faith and fate. I just don't believe that any of us are here by osmosis, you know. There was some intentionality and each one of us are given gifts and the ability to do something -- something good in this life. And the question is, you know, can we find our purpose and can we find our passion and can we execute on it the way in which God intends? And I think that to some degree I found mine. But I will tell you that, you know, as it relates to faith and fate… I said I was the only child, but my mother and father actually had a daughter before I was born. She lived two months and she died. And then my mother had about four or five miscarriages before I was born. Now can you imagine what it was like for that woman to go through all of that trauma and the only successful pregnancy -- pregnancy was the knucklehead I turned out to be, right? And so I'm very -- thankful to God every day that my mother had an opportunity to see me turn my life around. But I use that experience to -- and I share it with you just in the context of what I want to share with you here in terms of the work that we're doing in Baltimore and what

we're learning from that work as it relates to poverty andfamily formation. And I want to end just a little provocative thought around -- around the opioid crisis. So the way that we're structured at my organization the name of the organization is the Center for Urban Families, right. The tagline, however, is helping fathers and families work. And there's a lot of intentionality around that because so much of our social welfare system, our social welfare policy is so maternal and child health centric in that we struggle as a society to figure out when you hear Kathy talk about this notion of what fathers need and what they yearn and you hear some of her -- you know, her quotes. Our social welfare system and apparatus does not easily provide support to any male of any ethnicity when they fall short. And so we have -- we struggle mightily to figure out how do we strengthen families within the context of inclusion of fathers and in the family structure. And so that intentionality around that tagline that is actually when you -- when you face our building you will see the Center for Urban Families and a placard on the building says helping fathers and families work in West Baltimore because we want men to see that there's a place for them in their community. Programmatically we have a very large workforce development portfolio that we work with men and women age 18 and above. We have a couples-based program that is for parenting couples in romantic relationships who are trying to figure out this relational thing. And most typically the women come and they drag their partner in with them, right, and it takes a little while for him to get oriented. But what I can tell you is once they begin to develop this new social network around a similar set of relationships and community values you begin to see these couples, you know, kind of take on these new attributes. And they want the same things for their families that most of the folks in this room if not everybody in this room want for themselves. And then our programming includes a portfolio targeting young men who are fathers. Generally speaking, half are in a bucket where they're in a romantic relationship with the child's mother. They may not reside with the child or with the mother, but they're in the child's life and they're in the woman's life. The other -- other bucket are noncustodial fathers where the relationship has disintegrated and they're trying to figure out what they're going to do. What we want to help to do is to prevent -- prepare them for employment, manage child support, manage their relationship with the child's mother independent of

whether or not they're in a romantic relationship or not, and also if he's not in a current relation to prepare him for what manhood looks like in the context of the next relationship he gets into. We also have a practitioner's leadership institute where we do training and technical assistance around the country. And also within that portfolio we have a cohort based academy where we train practitioners to develop leadership skills and to deepen their impact and capacity.. This year we suspended our national model at the request of the Annie Casey Foundation to work with a grassroots practitioners in Baltimore as a result of some of the frustration that came out from the uprising around the death of Freddie Gray in 2005 -- excuse me, 2015. And we also have a -- a research and evaluation unit. That's an expertise and capacity we don't have in most organizations like mine. But because of the investment of the Annie Casey Foundation we as a non-profit have that current capability. I will tell you that about 55 percent of the folks we work with have been exposed to the criminal justice system, both men and women. About 60 -- 60 percent of the folks have a high school credential or a GED. But that in and of itself is -- it's a little bit misleading because when we administer the test of adult basic education most of the folks, even though they have a high school credential, can't read and do math beyond the eighth grade level. And it makes it really, really difficult for them to get connected to employment particularly with a career trajectory. With that said, what we have decided to do is to unpack some of the issues that really prevent people from moving forward. And the first issue that I want to tackle in your handout you -- in your -- in the portfolio I gave you there's a one-page sheet that looks like this. If you would pull this out. Josh kind of alluded to it and Kathy mentioned it as well around child support. So geographically this is where we're located. The Center for Urban Families is located in West Baltimore in ZIP code 21217. 21217 also includes Sandtown Winchester. That's the community where Freddie Gray lived and where he encountered the police. We're directly across the street from New Shiloh Baptist Church where Freddie Gray's funeral was held and we're three blocks down the street from Mondawmin Mall where the events around the uprising took place. So that's sort of like where we are. So if you look at the chart that's there on your far left-hand side you'll see the column that's labeled ZIP code. So we're gonna focus on those three ZIP codes in that red area 21215, 21216, and

21217. The bottom is 21217 what I just described where we're located. 2121- -- excuse me, 21217. At the very top is 21215. A landmark would be Pimlico Race course where the Preakness Stakes horse race is held. And that's sort of slightly northwest of Mondawmin Mall. And 21216 if you remember the CVS that was looped in the media and burned that would be that area going west and a landmark would be Coppin State University, right. So these are three contiguous ZIP codes. If you go over to your fourth column you'll see what's labeled total state arrears. That's the amount of state owed child support. Meaning this is money that comes as a result of a low income custodial parent applying for welfare benefits and the system saying to the custodial parent you are required to pay this money. To the custodial parent as a condition for receipt of those benefits you've got to tell us who the non-custodial parent is. This is how we get to the state owed arrears, right. And if you look at the three ZIP codes you'll see the total amount that's owed for those three ZIP codes. But if you come down to the bottom right quadrant you'll see that some in terms of total number of cases 3848, so 4 -- round that up to 4,000. In those three ZIP codes those 4,000 individuals owe an aggregate of $26 million in state owed child support. That also happens to be three of the top ZIP codes people released from incarceration come back to. And you overlay that with other issues particularly around debt. Not necessarily child support debt because I've already mentioned that. This is where people typically have taken out loans from proprietary schools where the loans typically range between 8 to 15,000. And there's really no benefit in terms of training and placement on the back end of those loans. So they have that debt. Then it's also personal -- you know, personal loans that people make, but it's also a population of folks that are largely exploited by the unregulated tax preparation services, right. Meaning that these are people who earn some income and by the time you get to tax season and they file their taxes then these unscrupulous, you know, entities will set them up for these rapid advance loans where they end up paying 30, 40 percent on a loan. So you can see that it's not likely that the quality of life in these communities will be greatly improved unless we have a way in which we deal with something particularly this child support debt. And so what we've done is work with the State of Maryland, the child support administration in particular and we brought men together from West Baltimore, we brought them to the table

with child support and we designed a way for them to participate in programming. And if they participating in programming we get them connected to employment and they pay on the original order. Then over a two-year period they can get that debt wiped away. And the reason why this is important if you flip on a business hat for a minute that this arrears can never be paid off, right. If this was a financial institution that collected -- you know, that issued credit cards they'd wipe this debt off as uncollectable. And so a person who owe -- comes in who owes $20,000 in back state-owed child support, meaning money that's not going to the family, it's going back to the state, can have that arrears wiped off with doing the right thing, right. The problem is on the back end when orders are set too high in the first place. And so most of the time these orders are set in a way that a person who gets a job can never pay it. And in the State of Maryland the state can take up to 65 percent of a person's W-2 income to pay back that $26 million. That's just how complicated this is. And so it really requires that we engage in reform efforts to help alleviate these kind of challenges. But we also are working with the state to figure out how do we as opposed to the state saying to a custodial parent particularly when they present and say that I am in a romantic relationship with a person who I've had a child or children by, but we don't want him to go to child support. We want support from the state so how do we get the state to reform its practices, its policies and procedures to recognize them as an intact family? There's some federal stipulations that if they don't reside together the state automatically has to send this person to child support. So we also have to have conversations at the federal level as well. This is really complicated but I think it's really important that we -- we lift this up. The -- the other part of what I wanted to lift up is, you know, just touching for a minute on the issue around the opioid crisis, all right. We will never with our current approach to drug and addiction stop what's happening with the opioid crisis in this country, right. It's further complicated with the -- the infusion of fentanyl which I assume most people here -- and the chemical man- -- chemical manipulation of other drugs including marijuana in the form of what's known as K2 on the street which then, you know, has this adverse effect on the chemical makeup of a person's brain. Where young people in particular who are predisposed to using K2 are a kind of a chemical reverse -- reverse approach to marijuana they will have to be

on medication for the rest of their lives to just manage the devastation that's happening to their brains. And so these are all the issues that come to play in communities and particularly communities of color. And when you think about the fact that in some communities, Baltimore is no different, where we've had zero tolerance policies around dealing with issues particularly as it relates to the -- to the opioid crisis. And this goes back many, many years. This is another new phenomenon to communities of color where we've literally taken, you know, the equivalent of a vacuum cleaner and we've sucked up large numbers of minority people, particularly minority males, into the criminal justice system independent of whether or not they've been convicted, right, they still have arrest record. But what that does it restricts them from certain segments of our labor economy. So in essence you got Josh -- now Josh doesn't look like he can do any kind of home improvement, right. But Josh has a criminal record and the only job he could get is in construction. Now if Josh doesn't have any competency around, you know, home improvement and he doesn't like it would you want him working on the construction of your house, right? That's the -- but that is what's happening in our society. We are pigeonholing people into certain sectors of the labor market and they have no competency and no interest in the field, but they have to earn a living. And if they can't do that then what else will they do? Then they've got to resort back to an underground existence. And underground is all -- doesn't always mean illegal, right. In some cases it does, but often it's somebody doing a really, you know -- a hustle where they're not on anybody's payroll so they're not paying taxes, they're not paying into the Social Security system. That's a conversation for another time. But that means as they age we're going to have to take care of them in other ways. So this is how complicated this is and why I think it's important for all of us to realize that, you know, as much as we -- and I'm not necessarily talking about the people in this room although I could be because I don't know you that well, right. When we don't think of all of us being in the same boat together and we think that we can isolate ourselves from what is happening in urban -- urban America we have a real problem that's gonna metastasize and only get worse. So I hope I haven't offended anybody and hope I provoked a few thoughts around, you know, the things that Josh had asked me to talk about. Thank you.

MR. GOOD: Thank you so much, Joe. And I just want to reiterate that perhaps as a predicate for this conversation I think part of our idea in structuring this panel this way is that we tend to think in terms of sort of the large national data or the policy questions and go down to its application. The idea here is to try to -- to try to have some direct connection to first hand stories to the streets, to the trenches and be a little bit more grassroots about this conversation around -- around the perennial issue as well. So, Adelle, you're up, please.

Q&A

QUESTION 1

MS. BANKS: Thank you for this. It's sort of hard to be the first questioner after all that material -- rich material. Could each of you talk about how much men who either are -- have interviewed or have worked with speak of faith or not and how much that forms their views of themselves as fathers?

MR. JONES: So, you know, I don't know that they will actually use the word "faith". You'll hear more often than not -- and I think Kathy kind of alluded to it -- in terms or spirituality, right. But what happens is that, you know, Kathy's title of her book Doing the Best I Can can you -- think of, you know, this area within, you know, the tables as being the economic playing field, right. And you know you can play that game and you know you've got some skill and some competency, but you can't get over this hurdle that these tables represent to get onto that playing field. And so what happens is there's a lot of frustration. And when you think about the events around the uprising associated with the death of Freddie Gray in April of 2015, Freddie Gray was just a -- you know, it just ignited a set of frustrations that existed because people were in very concentrated, impoverished communities where no economic opportunities prevented them -- or presented themselves. And so they tried and they tried and they tried and they tried to hold onto their faith or their spirituality and at some point, you know, it just overwhelms because, you know, these -- these folks grow up and they see other people playing on that field. That's where the frustration come. You see other people playing on that field. You want to get there and there are barriers to you getting there. And even if you can get there the wages that you can earn based on some of what has happened to you in life really prevent you from earning wages that will allow you to take care

of yourself and your family. And so this whole notion of -- and to some degree many of us we receive federal grants so we -- we have to be thoughtful about how we engage in a faith conversation and spirituality as it relates to receiving, you know, public funding. But that aside, almost everybody that I work with barring some, you know, kind of mental health challenges or deficiencies always talk about spiritual, you know, concepts. And particularly when the start to engage in positive conversations and developing new relationships they want so bad to take care of themselves, they want so bad to take care of their children, but they just don't have the capacity to do so. And then that frustration comes out it can come out in some very miserable ways as it did in Baltimore in 2015.

DR. EDIN: Yeah. Great answer. I would say Joe is completely right. The mantra is I am spiritual, but not religious. And, you know, I'm married to a sociologist in religion who studies African American religious ritual and it is striking how few of these men feel connected to faith institutions. Why are faith institutions important? We know institutions are important because historically they've organized our behavior, helped us give philanthropically in ways that have been transformative. And when men move away from the institutional context they don't have those guardrails that -- that religion has traditionally. I will say that a subset of them are very into their spirituality and they're seeking to remake religious -- religion in a highly entrepreneurial way. You know, they're -- here's these guys who are super down and out. They're going to the library and they're reading about the cargo cults and, you know, Islam and they're borrowing a little bit of this and a little bit of that and really trying to craft their own relationship with faith. But, of course, the downside of that is it's not institutionalized, but also it doesn't bring you into community with other people because often these are so specialized there really isn't anyone to share your faith with. So it's a real shift and, you know, I don't see what -- I'm not sure who beyond maybe the Mormon church is successfully recruiting and -- and providing an avenue into more institutionalized forms of faith.

MR. JONES: Yeah. Other than, I would also add the Nation of Islam --

DR. EDIN: Yes.

MR. JONES: -- does a tremendous job in urban communities of engaging men unconditionally. One of the -- you know, some of our more affluent churches they struggle to engage the kind of men that Kathy and I are talking about, right. You know, they dress differently, their norms a little bit different, they can be disruptive. You know, I'm -- matter of fact, you know, if you asked me would I want a really good guy to come to my organization or do I want a knucklehead and I will pick a knucklehead every day of life -- every day of the week. And they come in with a bundle of energy. And I have guys who are trying to tell us how we're gonna run the organization. And we kind of chuckle a little bit, right, and you have to be prepared and you have to have a staff that's skilled to take in people who come in that raw. And it's no different than you take somebody who has, you know, talent to play basketball but has never played organized ball and you have to get that person to develop the discipline, the skill to work and be a part of a team. And that cultivation you know where it should come from? It should come from the center of a person's, you know, being born to a family, right. And ideally I think we all would agree that a two-parent -- you know, a two-parent -- somebody being born into a two-parent relationship is the ideal. But our family construct has changed so much in this country and we have too many young people in particular who are growing up not knowing the identity of both parents. And when that identity is missing, half of that identity is missing folks struggle with how do they develop norms and values and beliefs that are consistent, uninterrupted, and uninfluenced by other things include our current culture which to some degree does not bode well for thinking about faith and family.

MR. GOOD: Carl?

QUESTION 2

MR. CANNON: I actually have two questions. The first one is, Kathy, when you were talking about the -- these -- and then Joe was talking about the rules for who -- how you get to see your children or don't and Joe mentioned these people being sort of shoved into professions which they have no real aptitude. It reminds me we -- we've been writing about this for a long time. But so in the FDC program, yeah, if there's no man in the house then you can't get your check so the man either moves out or pretends to move out. But then if he's making money -- but then when he -- if he falls behind in child support or there's a -- or there's a falling out and

there's no marriage certificate so he has no parental rights. And if he wants -- even if he wants to contribute if he's behind these child payments he can't. And then, you know, then when he goes to the job program they try to put him in a job that he doesn't know anything about. It seems like a very complicated, even imaginative set of government regulations designed to discourage family formation. What's the answer?

DR. EDIN: Oh, wow. Well, I'll take a stab at this. But, you know, one, I guess you could say bright spot is that our cash welfare system is all but dead. We only have about 900,000 adults on the rolls at any given time across the nation. About half of those just in New York and California so.

MALE SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

DR. EDIN: The cash welfare system.

MALE SPEAKER: Oh, cash welfare?

DR. EDIN: Right. So very few people now are under the requirement that sort of the man of the house sort of rules. Those were really -- you know, a Supreme Court case in the mid-70s said they were unconstitutional. But they -- they're informally -- they're still practiced in public housing, right, so there are different variants of the man in the house rule. What is the answer? Well, as I shared from the Building Strong Families of the BSF program couples in that program -- so these were all couples who had a Medicaid birth -- who met a modest married -- marriage bar as defined as no welfare, steady work, a car, stable place to live, you know, not in major debt were two-thirds more likely to marry. So I just told you that, you know, this marriage bar is not really economic, but the solution may still be economic. Finding -- finding that piece of stability I think is still the key to marriage. And you can't mess with this honestly because people feel that it is immoral to marry outside of these conditions. So we did this qualitative subsample of the historic fragile families study where we met 75 of the -- of the 5,000 couples in the hospital and we did these in-depth narrative interviews with them and followed them over four years. And we wanted to sample all unmarried couples. And two years in two of the couples admitted they had been married but had been ashamed to tell us or anybody else because they weren't yet -- they hadn't met the bar. Another couple got married without meeting the bar and -- at the Justice of the Peace

and went to tell their relatives and were roundly shamed by grandma and auntie for -- for marrying below the bar. So, you know, this is a moral belief that you don't marry just to get divorced. Marriage is -- marriage is forever and you ought to not marry when the risk is high that you'll -- you'll break up. So it's -- so I think it's still an economic story in terms of how to -- how to heal these relationships. These young people really don't have hope.

MR. CANNON: My second question. Joe, I'll direct this to you because that church that -- or that funeral was I've been there.

MR. JONES: Uh-huh.

MR. CANNON: If I'm a member of that church I was -- every once in a while if I was going outside of my area and I would see these rich churches out that ring Baltimore in the suburbs I would think that they have a role. I don't know what the role should be, but that they should be helping. Do you think that's a reasonable expectation? And if so, how could they help?

MR. JONES: I do think the church has a role. I think some churches struggle to figure out what that role is, how to do -- you know, how do they create terms of engagement with the population of folks that we're talking about. I really was encouraged the night of Freddie Gray's funeral when things really kicked off in a bad way in Baltimore. I live like three miles from my office and my mother lives in between. So I left work to go home and freshen up and we'd agreed we would meet at the church later on. By the time I got back members of diverse clergy had gotten together and done a community walk. And they did this community walk through the area of the unrest. And I joined them back at the church at the end of the walk. And what they had done was they had encountered these different factions of gang members along the walk and these gang members all talked about how they wanted to be a part of the solution, they wanted to help with the cleanup. And so we spent close to up to midnight in the church with them talking about ways in which they could -- they could heal. We were joined by Freddie Gray's mother, sister, and their attorney. And the next day there's a little -- it's a -- I hate to call it a restaurant because it's just short of being a real restaurant. And I only go there when I'm starving. And

my wife would kill me if she knows that I'm eating that stuff in there. But nonetheless I'm in there and, you know, my -- I come from the street so to speak so my awareness is -- I'm never, you know, letting my guard down where I'm gonna be a victim, you know what I mean? So I'm thoughtful about what I do and how I comport myself. And I see these two guys sitting outside on this rail and they're staring at me big time. And most the time I'm suited up, right. In the hood, you know, I got on a suit and tie. I'm modeling what I want the people in my organization who come in for services to see and that's the mantra for the staff as well. And so these two guys are looking at me and they look real rough, you know. And so I step outside and looking around, I come back in, I get my order and a guy said, "Hey, man, can you come here for a minute?" And I looked at him, you know. So my awareness is up. I'm prepared for whatever comes off. I can't run. That's the last thing I want to do is run, right. And he looks at me with this really, you know, hard look. He says, "Man, don't you work at the building over there?" I say, "Yeah." He said, "Man, can you help us get some shovels, some bags and stuff so we can go help clean up?" That's, you know -- that's the beauty of what can be available in communities when we reach out to people. And so I think that, you know, the churches they do play a role. New Shiloh is one of those churches that has really, you know, opened up in terms of doing mentoring and that kind of thing. But I still to a great degree see some -- some churches that struggle and I would say that there are some churches that are -- because of the number of issues that their congregations have they struggle with being all things to all people so they're kind of like overwhelmed --

DR. EDIN: Yeah.

MR. JONES: -- with folks who, you know, have health issues, who have eviction issues, who have childcare issues. And so they're doing their part and it's hard for them to extend themselves any further. But there are also that other segment of churches that I don't know if they really want to, you know, have a relationship with the kind of folks that we care about in this conversation.

MR. GOOD: Tina, go ahead. Thank you for your patience.

QUESTION 3

MS. NGUYEN: (Speaking off mic). Kathy, you mentioned the (inaudible). I was wondering if you had an opinion

about the (inaudible) type of figures that young men are being (inaudible). Is this a temporary phenomenon that's tied directly to like the social media age or do you think that this type of thing's going to be a long-term trend?

DR. EDIN: I don't know because I haven't heard of -- I don't know about that. So you tell me. So we've been out in the field all summer talking to young men and this hasn't come up.

MS. NGUYEN: Really?

DR. EDIN: No.

MR. GOOD: Just give us an overview --

DR. EDIN: Yeah.

MR. GOOD: -- of his followership.

DR. EDIN: Right. It might be like a somewhat different social class or something.

MS. NGUYEN: (Speaking off mic). It's -- I think it's maybe more among young millennial men who are -- who are (inaudible) because they introduce you to like (inaudible) male identity first through fairly (inaudible) or clean your room more often.

DR. EDIN: Huh.

MS. NGUYEN: (Speaking off mic). Just how you get -- like just how you further develop (inaudible). And then the (inaudible) goes a little bit further into an idea -- into this idea of male dominance or male -- whoever said it earlier about the (inaudible) kind of builds on that. And then it ends up (inaudible). But --

DR. EDIN: So --

MS. NGUYEN: -- started with idea of like -- they all start with this idea of like (inaudible) in masculine identity.

DR. EDIN: Okay. So there have been earlier versions of this I'm sure you're not shocked to hear. I'm thinking of even the David Blankenhorn and, you know, some of the earlier books like Fatherless America. We're sort of just pull yourselves up by your bootstraps and be a real man perhaps. You could say some of that was -- that was the Promise Keepers movement. I think this is tricky. I -- you know, I have -- I've shied away -- although we

know from literature that informal child support benefits children's well- being, their emotional more than formal child support. I've shied away from recommending it because in these informal arrangements men can sometimes use their economic power to make demands. I think in the -- yeah. I mean, the war between the sexes is kind of unbelievable already so this might be more manifestation of sort of what's in -- what's in the ether already. I'm not sure that these two particular people are special or, you know. We just had a representative from a fathering program in my class at Princeton and this -- this young man the entire time who is a leader in the organization didn't call women women, but used females. And consistently in the conversation he used the term a good fe- -- she was a good female versus a bad female and you could just see the students black -- you know, black and white students just like cringing. So it's an issue. But Joe -- Joe probably knows --

MR. JONES: No. I mean, the only thing I would say is it's not dissimilar from gangs where, you know, when there's the absence of the love of a family and a household that, you know, your family of origin, you know, you then are -- you're very much vulnerable to -- particularly in urban communities and even suburban communities where to be susceptible to joining gangs that will replace their family element. And whether or not it's, you know, it's a stringent as you talk about pull yourself by the bootstrap there are always these enclaves of vehicles for people to get attached to that are not necessarily healthy. And but that's what happens when we leave young people without the -- the ability to be nurtured by the people who bring them into this world.

MR. GOOD: That's very interesting to think about the social media pool and this psychology professor from University of Toronto who has now 933,000 Twitter followers who had sort of a meteoric rise came out of nowhere. And there is a unique vacuum pull call that seems to be at work with him somehow especially maybe -- especially most millennials. John Podhoretz?

QUESTION 4

MR. PODHORETZ: So I -- I see something very poignant in your description of the attitude toward marriage and the marriage bar which is that it seems like an extraordinarily romanticized idea of marriage that is potentially terribly at odds with the goal of securing marriage for all of these people in the sense that, you know, throughout recorded history marriage was simply the unit relationship between a man and a woman producing

children, you were an economic unit, you -- you pulled your resources, you lived with multiple generations and all that. And that you add in this idea that, you know, you are supposed to be -- you're supposed to elevate yourself to a certain point at which it is now acceptable for you to be married and that below this point or below this bar you're not good enough or you are not -- what's gonna happen to you is not gonna be good enough and you're gonna fail at this and therefore you're gonna somehow do damage. It's immoral like you said. It's immoral somehow. Whereas of course in a world in which everybody was married and there were no divorce -- you know, there were -- divorce was not a factor marriage was the thing you did when you turned 17 and 18 and you had sex with someone or you wanted to have sex with someone or you were caught having sex with someone and her -- and her father made you get married particularly if you were pregnant. And I'm wondering if this incredibly romantic romanticized idea of marriage -- I mean, it seems to me the great problem of our time in relation to this is that there is no -- since there's no censure of the world -- at least in the middle class there's no censure to dissolving a marriage or not being married or something like that and that for a lot of us who look at this think, well, in order to create a culture of marriage there have to be -- the guardrails also have to be shame at getting divorced or, you know, something like that. But you're describing a world in which people expect too much out of marriage it seems to me almost.

DR. EDIN: So there is -- I always say about my work I absolutely couldn't make this up. And truth is stranger than fiction. But I just want to put out a few thoughts. First of all, marriage has -- single parenthood does not increase depreciably among the college educated. It's about -- probability is maybe 7 percent now. So it's not increased depreciably. And divorce is down among the middle class. And maybe in part because they too are looking for a soulmate. So Andy Cherwin has written better about this than anyone else, but it's really, you know -- you can blame the marriage -- the middle class for the standard, right. And we know the middle class are increased -- increasingly finding partners more and more like themselves. They're waiting till they're older, oftenly 20s, they're having children in their early 30s and those marriages are very stable. Shotgun marriages fell apart at a rate of about 50 percent so very, very unstable. Another thing that we have to be careful of I think is

romanticizing the marriages of the past. So when you talk to our dads about their parent's marriages, you know, the kind of marriage where there is no conversation or he's functionally absent, they utterly reject this. They also utterly reject the kind of marriage not uncommon among the working class as you can imagine where he drinks up half the paycheck on Friday night and beats the woman all weekend. So these men are reacting to something real that they have seen that was not so great. And, again, this theme of new wineskins. Can we -- can we think about ways of -- I mean, these men aren't demanding anymore -- and women, right? Women are in this too. I've written mostly about women. This is my one -- one foray into talking to men. You know, can we ask them to want something we don't want? And, you know, in order to change the marriage bar we're gonna have to change our marriage bar and that's not gonna happen. So it seems to me that if -- you know, if this was a subcultural issue that would be one thing, but it's not. It's a culture-wide issue that's in my humble opinion manifesting itself throughout the distribution. But it's ironic and maybe a little hopeful. You know, there's certainly not -- marriage is a fading dream, but it's not dead.

MALE SPEAKER: If I can just follow up. So if -- if what you're saying is middle class marriage has created this marriage bar that is a workable marriage bar -- get married later, do a sort of mating --

DR. EDIN: With a soulmate.

MALE SPEAKER: -- with a soulmate, have children when you're able to financially support them and all that and there it is and so now maybe we found some secret sauce that will make this work after a couple of generations of real displacement. What is it, then, that needs to be done to establish the behavior that will make it possible for the people that you're talking about to meet the marriage bar? Meaning, I don't know, don't have sex, you know, or have sex with appropriate, you know, contraception, you know, as opposed to the multiple -- you know, multiple babies, fathers of multiple babies and all that. Because the disjunction between the two seems very tragic. If you -- if you aspire to this thing that is reachable but you have no behavioral guardrails to help you get there in time, that's horrible. That's a -- you know, that's a tragedy because what you -- what you can get you're not satisfied with, but you can't get there.

DR. EDIN: Yeah. I don't want to monopolize this conversation with the thesis of two of my books so I'll just refer you to those books. But I -- but I will say that young people are having sex. And poor young people are having sex just a tiny bit earlier than everyone else. So it's a big topic, but it's -- to point to differential behaviors it's a little tricky because it's hard to actually tell that story. We can have the constant -- we can have the conversation about contraception. We can talk about abortion. Lower educated women are -- have more abortions than middle class women because they have more pregnancies, but they do not generally terminate a first pregnancy. They terminate when they've hit parody where the opposite is true for middle class women who terminate initial pregnancies in part because they have something to lose. So big topic, but I want to direct more attention over in this direction.

MR. GOOD: Father Raymond?

QUESTION 5

FR. DE SOUZA: I -- my question is for Joe. I just wondered if you could explain because I don't understand how these arrears for child support arise. So how does someone get behind? And obviously you've explained what happens when someone is way behind, but just if you explain what is the dynamic that leads to someone facing a child support payment he can't make and now down the road the consequences of that -- just take me through it.

MR. JONES: It's a little complicated, right. First off, you know, generally speaking, child support has three different formulas they can use to apply to creating child support orders, right. And you have to look at your state laws to figure out which formula your particular state. In some states different counties within a state can use a different formula, right. But generally speaking, Joe has a relationship with Mary, right. We're both poor, right, and we -- first of all, from a public policy standpoint we want Mary to have a healthy birth, right, because the cost of having an unhealthy birth is astronomical, right. So the way in which we would ensure she has a healthy birth is to ensure she gets early and consistent prenatal care. The way in which she is able to fund that is to approach the public welfare system and to apply for public benefits, right. And the public benefit system will say to her, Mary, you meet the income guidelines for consideration. Basically you're poor, right. However, in

order for you to receive this -- these benefits we need you to give us the information about Joe, right. And so she either has to, you know, push back and say I don't want the benefits or she has to give up Joe or she could use a designation called good cause which means that she has to say she fears for her health and safety as it relates to domestic violence or intimate partner violence. And if she raises that then she does not have to give me her (sic) name. But so she gives up the name and it's not likely that I'm gonna be with her. It's not necessarily in my best interest to be with her, right, because it's -- in the community it's perceived as being punitive, right. So she gives them my name and she has to come home if -- if we're in -- you know, if we're in a communicative relationship and tell me that she had to give my name to child support and they will be contacting me, right. Child support contacts me and they ask me to provide my income verification to determine how much money I have coming in that then is used to in part create a child support order -- or first establish paternity, right, making sure I'm the dad, right, and then create a child support order, right. So Mary gets these benefits. In general, the benefits that she gets is a loan to me dollar for dollar, right. So each money if I pay back the amount of child support that is due, then at the end of the month my arrears is zero, right. I paid

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FR. DE SOUZA: So the state is giving Mary the money and --

MR. JONES: The state is giving her --

DR. EDIN: And keeping the child support.

MR. JONES: Yeah. And keeping the child support. That's what state owed means, right. **FR. DE SOUZA:** Okay. So you pay -- so Joe pays the state.

MR. JONES: Yeah.

FR. DE SOUZA: The state pays Mary. If Joe doesn't pay there's the arrears.

MR. JONES: And because of the –

FR. DE SOUZA: But Mary's getting the money, though. Mary's getting what she's owed?

MR. JONES: No. Mary -- Mary's getting the benefits. She's not getting the child support. The child support that

I'm paying –

FR. DE SOUZA: Oh, she gets the public benefits?

MR. JONES: She gets the public benefits, right.

FR. DE SOUZA: And your child support goes to pay for those public benefits?

MR. JONES: Correct.

DR. EDIN: That's right.

MR. JONES: Right. And if I am able to pay that monthly order in total then at the end of the month there's -- you know, it's a wash. However, given the economic disadvantage of these folks that we're talking about being connected to the labor market when they aren't able to pay the arrearages grew. And because so many of the low income (inaudible) we're talking have been connected to the criminal justice system when they're in the system those arrearages can still accrue. So you can actually come out of jail with more arrears than you went in, right. And so when you come out the state then chases you down, right. So they chase Joe down and they catch me. So they catch me, they've expended taxpayer dollars to chase me down, they catch me, they go in my pockets. I don't have any money, right. So then an alternative is to incarcerate me for failure to pay. So if they incarcerate me that means everybody in here is paying more of their taxpayer dollars to warehouse me for a situation where I just wasn't in the position to pay. And so it gets very, very complicated. And then as I mentioned before like in the State of Maryland for those arrears that accrue if I'm able to get a job, right, the state can take up to 65 percent of my W-2 income to pay for -- to pay towards the arrears. And it's a regressive policy where, you know, let's make Josh Bill Gates. So if Bill Gates is in a similar situation and they use the same formula -- our regressive formula they take 65 percent of Bill Gates' money Bill gonna be pissed, but he's not gonna be destitute. You take 65 percent of Joe's income you're pushing me so deep underground that the likelihood that I'm going to be engaged in other activities that are inconsistent with community values is pretty high. And that's why it gets complicated and a reason why many states have begun to look at the forgiveness of state owed child support. So the federal government -- the federal child support office has said to state child

support offices for state owed arrears you can forgive that debt. Now if it's child support that's between Josh and Kathy so they -- you know, both of their incomes are pretty cool, right. Kathy's never gonna apply for welfare -- at least I don't think she is, right -- and Josh is never going to be a poor dad, right. So if their relationship disintegrates and Kathy wants Josh to pay child support, the child support office then serves as an intermediary to collect the child support that is then sent to Kathy. For that debt only Kathy can forgive that debt. That's not state owed child support. That's completely between two people with economic means.

FR. DE SOUZA: That's very helpful. Now is -- aside from public benefits does Mary get any cash income?

MR. JONES: It depends on what –

FR. DE SOUZA: That would be --

MR. JONES: -- you're in.

FR. DE SOUZA: That would be negotiated between the two or a court order or…

DR. EDIN: No. No.

MR. JONES: No, no, no, no.

DR. EDIN: It's state policy. So some states have a small pass through. All states used to have a pass through of $30 and a third, but many states in the advent of welfare reform wiped out their pass through so there's a zero percent pass through. Now if she leaves welfare she gets to keep the child support because she's no longer on benefits. But he's still got to pay on the arrears so the chance that he's actually gonna keep paying her is less because he's still paying on those -- those insurmountable arrears.

MR. JONES: And, you know, as it relates to the quality of life and healthy child development one of the other things that we want to be concerned about is the child having a relationship with both parents, right. So while the state will enforce child support, you know -- so let's say that Kathy and I have a, you know, baby and we in this -- you know, this public benefits, you know, arena and Kathy is pissed at me for one reason or another. You know, maybe I was -- you know, I messed around on her, I've been a knucklehead. She just doesn't want me to see my child, right. But does Kathy really have the -- you know, the -- you know, the arbitrary right to determine

whether or not I can see the child or not? So the state will enforce child support, but it won't enforce what's known as access and visitation or this parenting time. So the only way that I could avail myself to be able to engage the state around that is if I get a paid attorney because the public defender's office, no legal aid --

DR. EDIN: Won't take your case.

MR. JONES: -- handles those cases, right. And so when you walk into -- when you walk into the courtroom what you will have is you will have the state and you will have the custodial parent aligned with the state, although the state will tell you they're not there to represent the woman. They're there to represent the interest of the child. And I'm on the other side with no representation. And so trying to negotiate that if you are a low income obligor is -- it's -- it's -- it's not equitable, right, and it's not fair. And put -- put aside the interest of the mother and the father. What I'm most concerned about is that a child that is born to two parents has a relationship and is able to get the identity of both parents as that child grows. And that's why it's just so complicated. And our social welfare system has never really understood how to do this in a fair and unbiased way.

MR. GOOD: Let's take one more question and then well take a short break and come back. Will Saletan?

QUESTION 6

MR. SALETAN: I -- sorry. One personal question and one poli- -- I guess I'll ask the policy question first. It's about the child support. So, you know, it seems to me that what you guys have made a case for if not directly is a shift in outlook, a shift in approach from a punitive or a debt-based approach to a constructive approach. I don't know what the right terms are. I'm remembering one of you mentioned the Clinton/Gore administration. What I remember is Bill Clinton getting up at the Democratic National Convention in 1992 and saying, "I have a message for all the men out there. Take responsibility for your child." Now -- which was a great soundbite. I don't know what policies went with it, but it was fundamentally a -- I thought the message to the public was it was a lecture. It was, you know, do this because you owe it, right. So then we have this edifice of child support payments built up around that. And I was thinking what is a model that we have for shifting the outlook of policymakers from -- from punishment or debt to a construction approach? And sadly what came to mind was the 2008 financial crisis where we basically said, look, these -- these rich guys spent all this -- other people's

money and they owe all this money. They can't pay it. But if we try to enforce that we're gonna drive them under and it's gonna take down the economy so it was kind of a too big to fail thing, right. So what do we do for people who don't have that kind of money? And actually, Joe, you just mentioned something that struck a chord with me. You said -- you were talking about we can't afford the unhealthy birth. The cost of that is -- to society I guess becomes too much. So there is some point in the system where we can make the case to the broader public, you know, if you wreck the -- if you try to punish people to the point -- like if you withdraw support, she has an unhealthy birth, things get out of hand for you, right, so we have to change the way we deal with this. Are there -- what models are there for persuading the public that ecologically that -- not that it's too big to fail, but the -- that if we don't change the way we're dealing with this it'll bring us down in some way collectively.

DR. EDIN: This is too big to fail because we have 40 percent of all children being born outside of marriage today so this is too big to fail.

MR. SALETAN: Yeah.

DR. EDIN: So we -- Joe is part of a design lab that I organized with the Gates Partnership on mobility from poverty. And we have a brief on the partnership's website about child support answering this very question. But let me just tell you I think one -- one little inspirational story and then I'm sure Joe's gonna tell you about some of the work he's done in the state legislature in Maryland. But so judge -- family court judge in Hennepin County, Minnesota, looked around and he said, you know -- so family court judges see divorce cases, but they also in Minnesota end up seeing cases where the father denies paternity. Most states -- I think all states now allow you to voluntarily admit paternity and the vast majority of guys do. But for the guys who don't you have to go through a paternity hearing so that also comes to the family court. And he reached the conclusion after a couple of years that this was just ripping apart black and brown families. So the first thing he did is he noticed that a very small portion of guys were even showing up for these paternity adjudications. And when you don't do that you're in real trouble because the judge is gonna assume you make minimum wage and work 40 hours a week so you're gonna get an order you can't afford right off the bat. So he said, "What can I do?" So he looked

at this letter that the court was sending the fathers. You are -- you must appear for a paternity hearing, blah, blah, blah. And he simply made a few editorial changes that seemed friendlier and included a color -- colorful brochure of fathers with children. 50 percent more guys showed up at the hearings. Then he said for these couples -- now these are all couples where there's been a paternity denial so these are the hardest cases. He said, "We want to offer you the opportunity to come to a co-parenting class." You're broken up, right. When you're still together you're not gonna get that denial of paternity. And he offered eight weeks of co-parenting training for the men and women separately. So they went to these classes where they actually learned how to get along with each other. And then at the end they met with the mediator and came up with a child support order they felt was in the best interest of the child that included paternity time, parenting time, visitation and access. And then it was, you know, under certain restrictions codified by the courts and then informed. And, you know, very, very interesting approach. What I like about it is he treats co- parenting as a key social relationship. Like co- parents should be something we talked about. We're co- parents, right. This is the thing that must last. I haven't given up the marriage yet, but, you know, this is the thing that must last. So we're co-parents forever even if we're not -- we're not a couple. But it also had very -- I think 75 percent of couples, both mothers and fathers, completed the entire curriculum. Never happens. And they successfully 50 percent of the time were able to come up with this order. And men paid more child support, but they saw the kids more. So just one example from one place, but there are really innovate child support directors all over the country trying these kinds of things. There was more energy in the Obama administration than there is now for change. I think there's a bit -- I've heard that on the federal level there's a bit of a return to this get tough mantra. But, yeah, I think there are models out there.

MR. JONES: Yeah. I'll just refer you to Maryland House Bill 1502. It's called the Step-Up Program. We started a small pilot with child support that allows low income men and largely from the ZIP codes that I mentioned in the child support chart to come in for services, particularly employment services. And if they participate then over a two-year period of time they can get that debt wiped away. And we use that pilot with our child support

partners to go to the Maryland State legislature. And that -- that -- that legislation got converted and signed into law by Governor Hogan so it's now a citywide pilot where all of the workforce providers in Baltimore City are working in concert with one another so that low-income obligors who have this hellacious amount of child -- state-owed child support -- remember it has be to state owed. If they do the right thing in terms of workforce participation paying on the original order, not the arrears, then they can get the arrears abated over a two-year period of time. And that's encouraging. There are many examples of that happening in other places around the country. And as Kathy said, you know, from Clinton to Bush to the Obama administration there has been an evolution. One of the central figures in all of this was a guy named Judge Gary Ross --

MR. EDIN: Uh-huh.

MR. JONES: -- who was the child support czar at the time it was called under Bill Clinton. And he sent these edits to the states that basically said you states can forgive state-owed child support. That opened up the opportunity for states to explore, but it's also still left up to the discretion of the state, meaning the governor and the child support director. And some states are more rigid around these kind of policies than others. Some people don't want to be perceived as being soft on child support. And other people see it as sort of like how we've evolved in terms of our criminal justice system. The cost of incarcerating people in the United States is way too high. The cost of having these insurmountable child support cases with huge amounts of arrears is also insurmountable. So many people with respect to thinking about this from a business standpoint are thinking about how do we get this debt off the backs of low-income obligors. And it's important to -- years ago folks in the fatherhood field we -- we really wanted to shift how people were thinking about all dads as being dead -- deadbeat, right. So we came up with the distinction that was not deadbeat, but these guys are considered dead broke. And so how can you develop a set of policies for dead broke dads is much different than a person who has the economic means to pay and won't versus the person who has the ec- -- who has the economic obligation to pay but they can't pay because of all the issues that we talked about. Mainly because -- and due to their lack of participation in the labor market.

DR. EDIN: One of the restrictions that -- that was fought hard for eliminating prior -- just at the sunset of the Obama administration was the restriction that child support offices couldn't spend any money on workforce development. And that failed.

MR. JONES: Yeah.

DR. EDIN: So as it stands now child support offices can't spend any money in access and visitation and they can't -- there's a little bit of a caveat there that came as a result of the final rule. But they can't spend any money on workforce and training for fathers. So they can't do anything to enhance their capacity to pay given their federal funding.

MR. JONES: And that's important. So what that means is my organization and others like mine that do workforce development services we're providing a benefit to the state, but the state doesn't support our operating costs. So we have to identify funding from other places which we're willing to do. But it would be much better if the -- if the state and the federal government would invest in workforce services for child support as a means to collect, you know, debt that is largely going uncollectible and before these arrearages begin to accrue.

QUESTION 7

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you. So, Kathy, you kind of hinted at this in a response to an earlier question, but I'm really interested in these changing cultural perceptions of marriage and the bar that you need to reach. And I'm wondering how much those are perceptions that are determined by the couple themselves and how much those new norms are held by the community around them. So you had indicated that sometimes, you know, a grandma or an auntie is saying you're not ready yet which at least from my experience of white middle class mothers is not the case. So I'm wondering if --

DR. EDIN: If -- if the young people were still both living with their parents you would encourage them to marry?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Okay. So, yeah. Different housing -- so I guess that's one of the factors that I'm wondering about is how the community thinks about it and what's forming those norms outside of the couple themselves.

DR. EDIN: Well, in the last chapter of Promises I Can Keep, which is the book I wrote with Maria Kefalas on this

topic, we -- you know, we do speculate about what could have led to this. So the advent of the pill, the decline in the feeling that you had to be married to achieve social personhood especially for a woman, the increasing acceptability of non-marital childbearing. But I think the key point is that you no longer had to be married to achieve social personhood. When everyone doesn't have to get married, you know, and they no longer live in the world John was painting for us marriage can afford to become more special. And we do see that across the board evidence that it's being held to a higher standard culture wide so that's one level of community, right, is the culture as a whole. But when sociologists just look at this they look for norm violations as you know. They look for deviant cases. And the deviant cases have been striking in the level of social censure that they have provoked. So in the case of the couple who did get married they'd gone to a pawn shop and had gotten a ring. He worked at Popeye's, she had a -- she had a very -- I can't remember where she worked. Maybe she worked at Walgreen's. They did not have enough money for an independent apartment. She was living in public housing, of course, but he wasn't allowed to move in. But they decided to sort of go for it anyway even though they could not afford a shared living situation. So the other cases are similar. They hadn't met the bar, right. The bar is an impossible dream. The bar is essentially no welfare, you know, you've -- you've -- you're out of debt, you're relatively low debt, you have two stable jobs and a car and ideally an apartment of your own. It seems to me that every full-time full year worker ought to be able to afford that with their wages, you know. I spend a lot of time in O'Hare Airport, the world's busiest. And I sometimes just walk around there thinking how many of these employees earn enough for a little life. And I think the answer more and more, right, we know is they may be employed, but they -- they don't earn enough for a little life. And so, you know, it's that -- it's that piece that's really salient I think.

FEMALE SPEAKER: A follow up. Have there been changes in, you know, the community village or, you know, within the extended family to accommodate this or it's kind of the wider you just move back home and you -- you postpone or give up what might have been the plans?

DR. EDIN: You know, low income communities, as Joe will tell you -- because I once said to Joe tell me about

Penn North. This is the community Center for Urban Families. And he said, “Nobody who lives here is from here.” That’s what he said to me. And I think one thing we have to disabuse ourselves of is the notion that low income communities are communities.

MR. JONES: Uh-huh.

DR. EDIN: They’re -- we know from Rob Sampson’s work at Harvard there’s so much churning among low-income people, so much more so than other segments of the population, they’re churning between bad -- poor neighborhoods, disadvantaged neighborhoods, dangerous neighborhoods. There’s so much housing instability that -- and there’s -- you know, we could talk about that for a whole day. That this whole notion that there are these communities with norms --

MR. JONES: Uh-huh.

DR. EDIN: Yes. But not maybe in the way that we -- it’s not our town, right? It’s really not our town. So people do -- really do borrow from the wider culture, but everyone sort of knows what -- what the bar is, you know. So there’s widespread agreement across cases so that’s how you know that it’s probably a community think or cultural thing is, you know, if you saw all this variabil- -- variation you’d say, well, they’re making an individual calculation. But instead the same objects -- it’s almost a consumption bar. The same objects are part of the bar across the cases.

MR. GOOD: So we’ve got Alayna, Waj, Bob Smietana, Erica, and Alan. Alayna, over to you.

QUESTION 8

MS. TREENE: (Speaking off mic). Yes. My questions --

MR. GOOD: Can you just use that mic?

MS. TREENE: Oh, sorry.

MR. GOOD: Yeah, great.

MS. TREENE: Okay. Hi. So my question for you, Joe, more so relates to -- thank you -- when you brought up opioids before and just how -- and I know that’s a big focus right now from a government perspective as well how to deal with that. But from the people that you work with personally and from your experience yourself

saying that it was easily accessible --

MR. JONES: Uh-huh.

MS. TREENE: -- to continue your addiction while incarcerated what are some things that you think like you're obviously doing on a smaller scale? Like I'd love to hear more of like how that plays into what you do in your organization, but also what you think on like a broader scale could be done from a more government level.

MR. JONES: So from a government level I'm -- I'm skeptical what government can do in this space. So asking people to put on a business hat again. So at the height of my addiction -- and I kind of tested this with some of my compatriots. And at the height of my addiction I was addicted to heroin and cocaine. And I used between 8 and $900 a day in heroin and cocaine, right. So the commerce exchange that has to be existent for that amount of transaction is -- is huge, right. And so when I tested this out on my compatriots some people used a little more, some people used a little less, right. But in a city which at one time purported to have like 50,000 addicts even if you do the math across what that means on a daily basis, $800 a day, even if you came down to $200 a day it's in the billions of dollars. And the incentive in the drug game for reward is so incredibly high that it incentivizes good people to invest in that trade so you will see people of affluence who don't physically have to touch the drug who have invested in it. So for me there's literally no way that we will ever work our way out of this conundrum unless we figure out a way to take the economic value out of the drug game. And I don't actually know how to do that, right. If I did I wouldn't be sitting here with you all. I'd be sitting out there on that beach because I'm filthy rich. But I would say that, you know -- and I talked about this on a public commentary on WIPR, the local MPR affiliate in Baltimore, where what if we were to be open to bringing together a composite of some of the most intellectually capable people around this issue, right. Meaning folks from the business and investment community, folks from behavioral health, folks from economic -- you know, all the economic engines that we can think about who think about this from a business standpoint. But how would we also have some of the nation's largest former drug kingpins in that conversation who've demonstrated their ability to have gotten out of their game and have someone who can vouch for them including -- and have folks

from behavioral economics that are sitting around the table and aren't constrained by government to start thinking about how you create a model that takes the economic value out of the drug game. Right now we spend upwards of $15 billion a year on trying to fight the war on drugs. And we've been spending that since like -- like the Nixon era, right. If you -- if you went to Warren Buffet and Warren Buffet say, hey, tell me what the return on investment is for my $15 billion a year since Nixon I don't know what we could say was the return on investment. You know, the crisis hasn't got any better. The one thing that has changed is that the face of addiction, the color's different, right. And so we've got to do something a little bit more outside of the box. And I think, you know, if it were me I -- if I was a politician I'd be so open to bringing together some unlikely partners and suspects to have a very thoughtful conversation and strategy session about how to do -- how to approach this issue of addiction and particularly taking the economic value out of it a little bit differently. Other than that I just don't -- I know their game all too well and it's just too much money to be made. And right now there's no incentive for people not to con- -- so you -- you know, you make money. You're a risk -- you're at high risk for incarceration. So you -- you come from an economically disadvantaged community. What is the disincentive not to take a risk on making that kind of money? If you happen to be a judge or a doctor and, you know, if you -- you know, you scour the news -- the news you can find, you know -- you can find examples of good, upstanding people who have also succumbed to this stuff. So it's one of those things that it crosses boundaries, it crosses -- it crosses -- you know, it crosses conservatives, liberal. I don't know how many of you remember that in Philadelphia there's a couple of juvenile court judges. And these judges they had -- the community had -- they had built these juvenile institutions and the judges took kickbacks because what they were doing they were forcing young people into an institutional system that should not have been institutionalized. Because what they said was, you know -- what people said to them judges, "We will pay you," right. "And we will pay you if you will make sure that these bags are full," right. And they ended up going to jail for this, you know. And so when you have the economic value of something so high it just causes human beings who are frail anywhere -- you talk about, you know, faith and -- you know, faith and fate it's just I just don't know how else we'll get out

of this unless we change the economic -- you know, economic (inaudible).

MALE SPEAKER: (Speaking off mic.)

MR. JONES: Tell me -- have a -- let's have a conversation. Everybody here telling me one -- how do you think you would pay for it? Just throw it out.

FEMALE SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

MALE SPEAKER: Steal.

MR. JONES: Yeah. You can work and use all of your disposal income on drugs, right. Women, you know, sell their bodies, you know what I mean. Whatever -- whatever you can do to get money when you have an addiction as an illness is a big public health issue, right. And so, you know, in order to not be sick you will do what's necessary to -- you know, to compensate for that pain and anguish and that's -- you know, that's the answer. Whatever, you know, it takes for people to earn money is how you -- how you afford it.

MR. GOOD: Wajahat?

QUESTION 9

MR. ALI: Yeah. So first of all I just want to be the one to announce the awesome news I heard during the break that Dr. Kathy and Joe are opening for Jerry Seinfeld. Not a joke. Really not a joke.

MR. JONES: It's for real.

MR. ALI: In a month? In a month?

MR. JONES: Yeah, yeah. This month.

DR. EDIN: This month.

MR. ALI: Awesome. You obviously have won at life compared to the rest of us. But the second question is -- and just going off of what everyone has been talking about. I'm trying to focus. And if you feel like it's repetitive then just skip it. But this concept of messaging I think is going off of what Will -- Will and others were saying, right. When I hear especially Joe when you say, you know, fatherhood is a remedy for poverty my Spidey sense gets tingled because I just know how that's usually weaponized against people of color and low-income people. And so for focused messaging how do you make sure that message isn't weaponized against poor people and

especially people of color? And I think -- and low-income people. And I think that'd be helpful for us as writers. And that goes across, right, because even Bill Cosby I remember, "Pick up your pants," and, you know, Obama did it, Clinton.

DR. EDIN: Abso- -- and Obama did it too.

MR. JONES: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

MR. ALI: Yeah. And it goes -- and then even in immigrant communities I can tell you just pick up off that message and they say, oh, we're the good immigrant because they're the ones who, you know, aren't being good fathers and picking up their pants. And so when you -- the emphasis in this conversation is on these social connections --

DR. EDIN: Yeah. Which cues into what you were saying, Tina.

MR. ALI: Yeah. Which is so critical. And if fatherhood is a remedy for poverty, what's a proper message? That's one question. And if I may be so bold and ask a second question. This goes off of what Tina was saying about this maybe toxic manhood, right. It's not just in the alt right and young white men who feel like they're emasculated, but even among many religious communities, Muslim communities, black Muslims I've heard men can no longer be men, we're being emasculated as a liberally, Hollywood version of the man and feminists are emasculating men.

DR. EDIN: Yeah.

MR. ALI: I mean, I hear this across the board.

DR. EDIN: Wow.

MR. ALI: So how -- how has religion or that religious model that you were talking about helped or hurt this sense of manhood in relation to women if that makes sense?

DR. EDIN: Maybe I'll let Joe take the second one and I'll take a stab at the first one. So fatherhood is a remedy for poverty. The messaging, this is like one of the hardest things I can think of. When I started writing about fathers, you know, I was -- I had been writing about women, no problem. People would cry in the audience, you

know. I was loved, admired. I started writing about men same communities I was reviled. Told I wasn't interesting, told that I had the story wrong. And my male colleagues in the academy. So I just don't believe men -- these men are generative. You know, I -- I was -- I've been attacked by white male economists for telling you the story I told here today who used terms like worthless and scum to describe these men. So I think it's the last -- maybe the last socially acceptable form of prejudice among --

MR. JONES: Uh-huh.

DR. EDIN: -- progressives in America, but it is really strong. Now when I talk about the dads Joe will tell you I just show photos. I show photos of men playing with their children. And, you know, we're building a research base so I'm not an idea log so I'm not like going out and trying to find that fatherhood matters, but it turns out that the research is -- the research that's emerging is strong that increasingly -- especially as fathers are engaging more in these generative activities and these generative idea of what fathering is, they're involved and it's very, very meaningful even if they never live with the mother of their child. So information only goes so far, though. And you're right, there's a prejudice here that is -- that is really extreme. I wish I knew -- I wish I knew the answer, but it's tough. There are filmmakers. You know, the film Daddy Don't Go I think was a real attempt to address this. Andrea Yaros new book Man Up -- is it Andrew? So there are a lot of people out there trying to change this narrative and my sense is that we're failing utterly. But it is interesting because there was -- who brought up the cutting in line, the false belief? Maybe that was John. You know, that minorities are cutting in line and getting things they don't deserve. And then Joe tells the story of insurmountable barriers, you know. These are two opposite narratives. So it would be really great to get the top ad executives in the United States into this room and help us think about –

MALE SPEAKER: Because the function of this -- if you were to reframe it and just be like it's become an inequality issue affecting all ethnicities and have that message with those characters out there would that you think change it?

DR. EDIN: I don't know. I don't think so. I think we have to go deeper and find a way of -- I think one thing that

would help is if we showed that it was economically rational to behave in a different way. States are strapped for money. The federal government is strapped for money.

MR. JONES: Uh-huh.

DR. EDIN: That provides an opportunity to show that we can do better in a different way. And some of the stuff that Joe is talking about really would be a more efficient way to benefit children while at the same time benefitting the taxpayer. So those are some strategies I can see working.

MR. JONES: Yeah. I do -- and I've always been concerned about how we talk about these issues. That's one of the reasons why, you know, you heard me a little while ago mention the delineation between deadbeat versus dead broke because so many folks were saying, you know, these guys are just deadbeat, deadbeat when you realize they just don't have the economic means to pay, right, and so we create these ways. And I'll be honest with you, I'll refer you to the way --

DR. EDIN: Yeah.

MR. JONES: -- in which we tell the story about fathering -- and this is not just for fathers, this is around families the way that we -- in which we, you know, we tell the story here. But also a couple weeks ago we hosted an event at our building with actor Omar Epps. So Omar has a book out called From Fatherless to Fatherhood, right. So he did not have a great relationship with his father. He only met his father once. And so he is at our building with his mother talking about, you know, the way in which he now -- he's been married 13 years. He's a father to his children. And how in the culture of Hollywood these young actors that are coming up look to him and the conversations he's having with them around how to be disciplined in the culture of Hollywood.

DR. EDIN: Huh.

MR. JONES: If I was a young man going to Hollywood knowing me and the trouble I got myself into I'd be a menace in Hollywood, right. But having somebody like him who's respected, who's having conversations with these young men who are gravitating towards him that have -- they have access to a lot of capital, right. Their careers are taking off and they are in -- they're in an environment where not everybody is having a conversation

around, you know, be disciplined in your manhood. And so we need more of those conversations in our community. You know, a couple of -- a couple times over the last couple years and I worked with -- working with couples and we don't -- we don't promote marriage explicitly with these couples. We're taking them through a curriculum that has tenants of how to build a healthy relationship. And we've had a couple of different experiences. We've had some couples who've gone through and they looked at their relationship and, you know, they said this ain't healthy and then they created an exit strategy which is -- you know, that's okay because if you think it's not healthy and it's toxic, then maybe it's not okay for you to be together. But on the flip side we've had folks who've come to us and said, "You know what, we now think about our relationship differently and we want to get married." And we're like, "Okay. Cool, you know." But they said, "No, no, no. We want to get married here." So we've actually changed our building into a wedding chapel. Encourage them to connect with someone in the faith community to help them with pre- marital counseling --

DR. EDIN: That's awesome.

MR. JONES: -- and we supported that. But it's been their choice. We just create the environment and the tools for them to understand what a healthy relationship is. And we're not doing a longitudinal study so I don't know how long these relationships will last, but I can tell you it's much better to have them equipped with information so they can make informed decisions around family formation than for them not to have that information. And most of them tell us when they come to us we don't have these kind of conversations outside of this building around healthy relationships and even when consummating marriage. And so we -- how do we populate more of these opportunities for conversation and education in communities versus some of the other nonsense that we invest in?

DR. EDIN: One other thing. I want to lay the blame at the discipline of public health and medicine. The way that families of color and poor families generally are viewed is of a mother and child. And there are departments in leading public health schools -- I won't name names. I might have just been part of one -- but the departments are called the Department of Child and Maternal Health.

MR. JONES: Uh-huh.

DR. EDIN: So institutionally we have this image of the single mother. Often when I speak I argue that there are no single mothers because if you look at a child born outside of marriage in the first five years of life only 4 percent of the mothers are stably single. So this whole myth of --

MR. JONES: Uh-huh.

DR. EDIN: -- the -- you know, the stable single mother really doesn't exist at least along folks with non-marital births. They're in and out or relationships and this misapprehension I think, you know, goes to these men.

MR. GOOD: That's interesting given the point that Waj raised about messaging and what you name about public health schools in some of the most elite places in the country and especially the sort of class and education dynamic in marriage trends diverging as they have in the last 50 years.

DR. EDIN: Yeah.

MR. GOOD: You know, one line that has been thrown around recently that I think is provocative is the challenge to ask our progressive peers to preach what they practice since, in fact, their own -- their own family life is different than often ours. Bob Smietana, you're up.

QUESTION 10

MR. SMIETANA: It's on now. So two questions. One is so when you talk about this marriage bar, I wonder if the marriage bar is getting harder -- higher or is it just getting harder to achieve. Because when you -- when Kathy talks about the marriage bar I think that's my grandparents. My grandmother's an immigrant -- my grandmother was an immigrant knitting mill worker in river knitting mills. My father -- grandfather is a -- was a high school jan- -- or school janitor, but both were grade school dropouts, right. They didn't have any education, come from immigrant backgrounds. They were able to get married. They had -- there were jobs available that made the bar possible so I wonder if that's one thing we don't think enough about like the changes in economics make it harder to have the -- so a dad with a job might be the -- you know, a good job might be one thing. And then the second thing is we talk a lot about religious "nones" who are non-affiliated, but I wonder the -- when I think of religious "nones" I see a story. I see a well-off young millennial. And I wonder if we're not

telling enough stories about religiously unaffiliated people who are in poverty.

DR. EDIN: So I'll go to the first, you do the sec -- second?

MR. JONES: You can do both.

DR. EDIN: I don't like that idea.

MR. GOOD: You got two more in waiting as well.

DR. EDIN: On the marriage bar quickly so what we know -- here's the problem, Bob, is if you look at the change in male labor force participation and you graph a line predicting what would happen to marriage, if the same conditions pertained that did in 1977 when the earnings of working class men were at an all-time -- of unskilled men were at an all-time high you would have expected marriage to decline modestly, but it didn't. So the problem is not that that story is unimportant. It is explains at best one-fifth of the variance. But when one thing is like so cool, right -- it's a very simple way of explaining it. If one things changing like this and the other thing's changing like this, it can be that this causes this but it can't be fully. So a lot of this is that the cultural standard for marriage -- what people think it takes to be married has changed. However, there's something that we can't really measure and maybe this is part of what you're getting at and that is how do people see their long-term future. So you know this fracking paper from Melissa Kearny that shows no impact on marriage. Well, I'm like, duh, you know. Everyone knows fracking jobs are short term. Just because you have this sudden (inaudible) of shock -- positive shock and income in the community doesn't mean you're gonna see marriages. I have a young colleague who got -- came to me very upset the other -- the other month because the high school -- the redistricting drew the -- basically the high school she'd been hoping for for her infant had changed. I'm like, "Julia, your baby's two month's old, you know." But that's kind of how marriage is I think. And marriage is something you want to bet on for the long term. And so what we don't know is the degree to which just a loss of faith and stability is also ampping up -- ampping up what -- you know, what you think you have to have. You have to have a bigger insurance policy. You can't depend on the -- you know, in the old time -- old days in Philadelphia in 1950 you could literally step outside your door in Kensington and walk down, you know, the

street to what one of the many, many mills. I don't -- I think Stetson Hats was still going then. You know, that was the workshop of the world and find a job in a day. So and you could pretty much count -- I mean, there were -- there were exo- -- negative shocks and recessions and so on so it wasn't that people didn't have hard times, but…

MR. GOOD: That discussion of correlation and causation is a perfect set up for Alan Cooperman it seems to me given what we talked about this morning.

QUESTION 11

MALE SPEAKER: This question is for Kathy I think although, Joe, by all means. What relationship, if any, do you see between the decline of marriage and the decline of institutional religion?

DR. EDIN: Yeah. Good -- do you know? I'm thinking here. Amy was a sociologist in religion briefly, but I don't know that we know the answer to that question empirically, right?

MS. SULLIVAN: I mean, we know -- and you know this -- the life cycle effects of people falling away from religion as they grow up and out of the home that they were raised in intending to go back not necessarily when they're married, but when they have children. And that's become -- that follows until the current generation where people are still not going back. I suppose if you -- I mean, it follows then if you don't get married at all then you may have less of a reason -- a traditional reason to go back to a religious community.

DR. EDIN: Yeah. So the causation could go either way is I think what Amy is saying is marriage could affect religion. But if you look at the -- now I've come up with an answer the other way. If you look at the ethnographies like Herb Gans's the Urban Villagers and these classic ethnographies religion for better or worse did wield a lot of power on behavior. And, again, not all of that was good, right? But certainly people fell in line and followed the rules much more than they do now. So in some way that kind of religion is even less attractive than it used to be, you know, sort of the lock step. Now we have the seeker sensitive churches and the religious marketplace in the sense that you could choose. So even if the same number of people went to church as did in 1950 it might be less effective at regulating behavior.

MR. GOOD: And just real quickly, Alan, as a former AIE'er, you know, Bob Putnam, Charles Moory, Brad Wilcox

and others trace a lot of this to the class dynamic --

DR. EDIN: Yeah.

MR. GOOD: -- and say that in the last 40 to 50 years the declines in marriage and the declines in religion are far more severe in the bottom third than in the top third. And, of course, you know, the last several pieces that they've put out describe that at much more length. But that's just one -- one factor to keep in mind.

MALE SPEAKER: Does -- worldwide we see that people who are more religious tend to have more children. It's true in the United States and it seems to be true almost universally. And the general presumption about that has been that the causal re- -- direction is more religious people want to have more children, but it's also possible that it could be flipped and that having more children and having a stable family makes it easier to -- to transmit religion and maybe even makes especially institutional religion, not just spirituality or ideas about the supernatural. But the whole institution, the whole set of communities more valuable and easier to transmit.

DR. EDIN: That's interesting. I was thinking that that's why they wanted the bigger houses because they had more kids. I was gonna encourage you to control for that. Joe, do you want to add anything on that?

MR. JONES: No. I don't have anything to add to that.

MR. GOOD: Erica?

QUESTION 12

MS. GRIEDER: Thank you, both. I have a quick question for each of you. Kathy, I was wondering if you think that women, particularly in these bottom quintiles, perceive the rising salience of the father role for the father's themselves even if those men are retreating at the same time from the spousal role. And then, Joe, I was wondering with the work you do at your organization it seems like the men and women who come to you must be putting themselves in a really vulnerable position talking to -- to you or your members. And so I thought I'd be interested to hear any insights you have on how to earn trust with people who've -- who you've asking to trust you after they've been failed by other institutions or…

DR. EDIN: So women -- just remind me of the --

MS. GRIEDER: Do women perceive the rising salience of the father role?

DR. EDIN: Yeah. So gatekeeping is real and it's a huge problem and we could empirically demonstrate it and we can -- usually it's sparked when mom takes on a new partner. And, in fact, that dynamic alone is -- is a salient for whether a father continues to visit as his employment status or his incarceration. It's very big. So we talked about how men use their power over women, women also use their power over men. And without visitation rights they can essentially engage in gatekeeping and do. But there's also a strain of trying to keep dad involved. If you look at the child support data over time now that fewer and fewer women are being forced to turn over dad's name because wel- -- welfare is alive and well in Baltimore, but not in the rest of the country. There's something interesting going on in Baltimore. Fewer and fewer people have to turn over the name. You see that fewer and fewer women are choosing to use this virtually free service. And Danny Schneider has looked at the reasons for this and a lot of it is that they're -- they really think that it will threaten the father's ability to be involved with his kid. So mothers do -- when the relationship is good and the co-parenting is healthy they do try to give the guy slack and work with him. That's why teaching co- parenting is so important because when you can keep the empathy you can keep the guy involved. I would say yes and no.

MR. JONES: Yeah. This whole notion of trust and respect is so critical in any relationship. And for us we try to create and nurture this culture of trust and respect. At the same time we know that people are coming in who are very vulnerable, they've been hurt in many instances. The guys can put on a façade, the women can put on facades so we are aware that certain behaviors are coming into the building. We fully expect to see those that's why we're located in that community, right. But the other part of that is making sure that -- and we can't be all things to all people, right. We have identified what our core competencies are and we try to stay in our lane, but we also realize that the folks who come in have additional needs that we aren't prepared to address. And so partnerships is also a big part of that, but a partnership means that we bet that partnership in a way in which we know about the quality of the partnership. And there are some things that we have done to incorporate partners in our business. So we have a pretty large building, 32,000 square feet. It's two stories, right. And so we have -- we've had a longstanding, over 14-year relationship with parole and probation. So we allow pro- --

parole and probation agents to be stationed in our building and they can see their caseloads there. So when those folks need the services that we provide they don't have to send them someplace else across the city, all right. We also work with the Maryland Volunteer Lawyer Service to do criminal record expungement on site. We know that people don't have the kind of work support necessary to be prepared for the job interview and so we've had over a ten-year relationship with the Men's Warehouse, the clothier, that gives us donation -- tractor trailer loads of men's clothing. And we have less of that in terms of women's clothing, but we also have that as well. But more recently, you know, as it relates to hope and this notion of opportunity so we have decided as an organization -- and if you follow me for a minute. What we have done historically as it relates to labor force attachment is we've taken people and kind of taken them through a very rigorous process. There's a lot of structure and discipline. And I would say that's also attractive to people. Some people don't necessarily knock on the door and say, hey, I want some structure and discipline. But when you get structure and discipline in your life it can bring order, right, so I think that's also attractive to people. But historically average hourly wages of the folks that we work with have been between 11 and $12 an hour, right. That's above the minimum wage, right, but it is not a family sustaining wage. So we basically turned the organization inside out and re-engineered into this concept we call all-in, which means we're gonna go deeper and longer with the folks what we've helped to get into entry level employment. And so one of those partners in helping us to help people to advance socially and economically is the Able Foundation. So the Able Foundation is a local foundation. And what they have done we have a fund at the Able Foundation that is for home ownership financing assistance, right. So if people acquire the -- the economic ability to consider home ownership as an option for them they can then draw in on that fund up to $10,000. So we started to populate Baltimore City with folks who gra- -- graduates of our program who are now homeowners in Baltimore City. And the other, you know, thing that we have, you know, kind of held as a value is about 15 to 20 percent of our overall workforce -- keep in mind we have just south of 50 people -- 15 to 20 percent of our workforce at any given time are folks who've graduated from our respective program. So that's sort of like the formula we try to employ. And but I will tell you that we have had

people who have worked for me who have said I'm not so sure that the people who we serve can actually achieve any more than they've already achieved, right. And that's just not acceptable. And so that's -- you know, the center is not a place for you if you don't believe that the people have the -- you know, the agency to be able to work them -- work themselves to a different place with a certain set of support. So nurturing that culture and maintaining it it can be difficult at times and I think that is what allows people to come in the door. And you can kind of -- you ever walk into a place and you can feel whether it's --

DR. EDIN: Yes.

MR. JONES: -- it's the kind of place you want to be in? You ever met -- for the ladies in here you ever met a guy and right off the bat your maternal instincts kick in and you're like, huh, not him, you know, huh-uh. And so sometimes, you know, you have to depend on your gut so we use data. We have a research and evaluation unit and we do all those things. But bar none it's the culture that we try to maintain that respects people in the community and also -- and conversely people have to respect when they come into the building.

MR. GOOD: Quick plug on that especially since the love language of Faith Angle is writing a wonderful piece that brings these themes to life for a broader -- broader -- broader portion of the public. Having visited Joe's center maybe 10 or 12 years ago that's still available and they welcome guests. And if anybody wanted to do that I know that their team would be more than delighted to welcome you in. And it is a sight to behold because you have someone whose inner motive that you've heard today comes -- comes through rather brightly often times with 85 young men who are just getting started in a new direction in their life as was the case when I visited. So plug for that.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

MR. GOOD: And thank you so much, Joe and Kathy.

DR. EDIN: Thank you.

MR. JONES: I really -- I'm disappointed with you all because none of you have just -- you have just made no comment about the fact that Kathy and I are color coordinated.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Yeah, right. You need a little more light, though.

MR. JONES: Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey.