

Nicki: Welcome to The Healthy Rebellion Radio. This is an episode of Salty Talk, a deep dive into popular and relevant health and performance news pieces mixed with the occasional salty conversation, with movers and shakers in the world of research, performance, health and longevity. Healthy Rebellion Radio's Salty Talk episodes are brought to you by Drink LMNT, the only electrolyte drink mix that's salty enough to make a difference in how you look, feel, and perform. We co-founded this company to fill a void in the hydration space. We needed an electrolyte drink that actually met the sodium needs of active people, low carb, keto, and carnivore adherence without any of the sugar colors and fillers found in popular commercial products. Health rebels, this is Salty Talk.

Nicki: And now the thing our attorney advises. The contents of this show are for entertainment and educational purposes only. Nothing in this podcast should be considered medical advice. Please consult your licensed and credentialed, functional medicine practitioner before embarking on any health, dietary, or fitness change. And given that this is Salty Talk, you should expect the occasional expletive.

Robb: There's a Hunter S. Thompson quote that goes something to the effect, "When things get weird, the weird turn professional." Nicki just turned professional, folks.

Nicki: It's early, and I was just saying that I was feeling perky AF, and then I put my fingers over my eyelids and lifted them. And then I was recounting to Rob that, I don't know, I've been doing that for over 10 years now. Whenever I lift, before I get under the bar, I lift my eyelids up. I don't know. It ...

Robb: I guess I'm too busy looking at your backside to have noticed that so that has escaped my notice thus far.

Nicki: Just put my backs of my thumbs on my top of my eyelids, and I just lift it a little bit. And it just, I don't know, makes me feel like I'm ready to tackle it, babe. I know it sounds ridiculous. And people are probably like, "Oh, shit," but folks, it's the truth. Welcome to another episode of Healthy Rebellion Radio. This is another Salty Talk. This is Salty Talk, episode 40.

Robb: Lordy, lordy, lordy.

Nicki: And Rob's like, "Why is my wife here next to me, doing this?"

Robb: There's a pending job vacancy. Healthy Rebellion guest host. It's okay, babe. We'll keep you in the fight.

Nicki: Okay. Well, we have a few things that we wanted to chat about today, Canada, some vitamin D related stuff, and then also some things regarding domestic terrorists. But I thought we would start a little bit with some Harry Potter because it ties into what we see currently in our media landscape, specifically, with regards to Canada. Oh, now we have an interruption with the kiddo, but we shoot them away. As we've mentioned in multiple episodes, we're working our way through the Harry Potter audible audiobook series. And we just wrapped up, was it book four? The Goblet of Fire.

Robb: The Goblet of Fire.

Nicki: And we're now onto the fifth book. But in book four, one of the most amazing things that I ... It was just so striking how J.K. Rowling captured the journalist of Rita Skeeter in the book. This was written in the early 2000s, and she just did such a masterful job

creating this character that writes these sensational stories about different people at Hogwarts, which is the school that Harry Potter attends, for wizards and witches. And sensationalizes in a way, not just to get eyeballs and attention, but also to really mischaracterize and-

Robb: Defame.

Nicki: ... slander, defame, just to shape the reader's opinion of the particular person she's writing about. And when you look at what is going on in our media landscape and what has ... Particularly in the past two years, but probably longer, but it's really obvious these last two years. And it's really obvious with the situation in Canada. It's pretty jaw-dropping.

Robb: It is interesting. And we've talked with the girls a little bit about ... This Rita Skeeter character interviews Harry Potter, and there's a clear exchange there. And then something very different than that ends up in print. So we've talked to the girls about that and just ... I'll speak just for myself. I have some very specific beliefs around the way the pandemic has been handled and all that. And similar to the nutrition stuff, you folks would probably be surprised by how much energy I put into putting out an alternate hypothesis around this stuff. I probably approach this more directly with listeners than I do with the kids. I really try to say, "Well, there are these other people that believe this." And I try to do this in a way that isn't totally leading the witness and stacking the deck, and whatever metaphors I can stuff in there.

Robb: But what's been cool and I guess, validating that maybe we're not doing a complete shit job of parenting, is that usually given ... Input a little bit of information to the girls and let them make their own decisions. And they arrive at some pretty interesting insights, some commentary around how unethical it would be to interview someone and have an exchange of one flavor. And then the reported material be completely divergent from that, the issues they're in. And we're definitely seeing that with Canada, Joe Rogan, a host of things. People have been cranky about Joe for a variety of things, for a while, because I think that people have been noticing his star is ascending. And the main things he has going for him, he's a very bright guy. He's extremely curious, and that curiosity is pretty unfettered. He'll let the curiosity take him where it's going to take him.

Robb: And this is the hallmark of standup comedians. They tend to be remarkably smart and clearly quick thinking on their feet, but usually quite curious and look at the world a little bit of a different way. And that gives them some leverage, I think, compared to the rest of us schmucks. But what's interesting is Joe Rogan wasn't a white supremacist two months ago, two weeks ago. He wasn't all of these other things. It's been pinged at him here and there because he's had Jordan Peterson on, and different things like that. He had people who espouse a particular viewpoint or viewpoints around this pandemic, pandemic response, vaccines, all this related material. That's the topic at hand, that has gotten him in trouble. But the response has been to paint him as a racist, and it's fascinating.

Nicki: I mean, he has a larger audience than most major news networks.

Robb: Combined, yeah.

Nicki: So this is a huge threat. Nobody controls him, right? So he's dangerous to the powers that be. The people who want to control the narrative can't control him and can't control who he has on his show, and the conversations that they have. So there's not the little, slick news bites that I'm sure everybody has seen throughout the pandemic.

There's these clips that go around where it's like, every freaking local news station across the country, the newscaster is saying the exact phrase. And it-

Robb: Same intonation.

Nicki: Same intonation, same phrase, eight words long, and it's identical. And it's coming from 80 different people all on the same night. So they can't do that with Joe. Anyway-

Robb: I kind of diverted, I'm sorry.

Nicki: You diverted. I wanted to keep this more with regards to Canada because I feel like there is no news media covering it there, except for, apparently, the counter protestors. The media is filming and talking to the counter protestors, but hardly anybody is talking to the actual protestors. But we'll get to a bit about that. I wanted to share ... A friend of mine in Canada, she and her husband attended the Freedom Convoy last weekend. And she sent me an email. When they had gotten home, her husband had a text from a work colleague who's a doctor and who her husband has been friends with since the military. This woman could not understand how, and this is what she wrote, how he, "A principled man of untouchable virtue," would support, "White supremacists and neo-Nazi racists." So this is a person that knows her husband very, very well.

Robb: Who's worked with them both in the military and civilian life.

Nicki: And use him to be this man of extremely good character. How in the hell is he at this rally with a bunch of white supremacists? So her husband wrote this woman back and said ... And I think his response is just ...

Robb: It's more the response that we need with everything.

Nicki: So he says, "You think highly of me, you call me a virtuous man. And when you hear from the media that this movement is hateful and racist, you can't comprehend my involvement. Is it possible that I am a principled man and wouldn't be involved with something that was racist, and therefore, the truth you think you know may not be true at all? Could it be that the media, the media that's lying and not my character that needs questioning?" I don't know how this woman responded to that, but it just struck me. And this is what's happening across families and friends, and coworkers. Throughout this entire pandemic, right? You've known people your whole life, and granted, not all of your friends do you view them to be of untouchable virtue. Obviously everybody has friends that don't fit that category, but people that you know.

Nicki: And then all of a sudden, because of the news media and this narrative, and this shit that's happening and that has been happening for the last two years, you instantly throw to the wind all that you know about this person or these people, because somebody on a screen is telling you ... I guess the question is, why not get to the bottom of it? Have a conversation. Tell me more about this. Why are you going to this thing? It doesn't seem like something I thought you would go to. Why not reach out and have that kind of a conversation then, instead of being like, "I can't believe you're supporting white supremacists and racists?"

Robb: I had better formulated thoughts around this at various times when we've talked about it, but it is fascinating that this person abandoned what is probably a couple of decades of knowing another human being, and opted to supplant her lived experience in working with this person, in lieu of media narrative. And again, fine if there's a question there. It's like, hey, this is-

Nicki: Absolutely. It's really counter to how I-

Robb: Am I really seeing this? And launching in with, I guess, at least the option of a discussion. Hey, flesh this out for me. This doesn't seem like the type of thing you would normally hang out with. And I don't know, maybe that's just being cowardly or mealy-mouthed. If she thinks that it's all racists and white supremacists, then I-

Nicki: Well, it circles back to the media has just done a fabulous job of painting this picture, particularly of the Canadian Trucker Convoy, in this light. Right? And it hearkens back to Harry Potter. People that knew Harry and believed in him, all of a sudden now think he's this crazy, dramatic kid that is trying to get more attention and play up the fact that his parents were killed by the Dark Lord. And he's just got a flare for the dramatic and just is a huge attention seeker. People that knew him before start believing that because this woman wrote it in print. How long has it been said, "Don't believe everything you see online or in ..." But I guess, these media outlets have become just these ... I don't know. Some people, I think, take them as the beacon of truth.

Nicki: I certainly don't, but I don't know, it's just interesting. We're listening to this particular Harry Potter book, which, if you haven't listened to it and you're a grownup, it's not just for kids, it's a fabulous story. Read it. You can certainly read it, but the audio books-

Robb: I think the audio book is even better.

Nicki: ... are so good Because of the narration and the different character voices, and whatnot. Anyway, that's just my little plug for it. It's incredibly impressive. I never read it when it first came out. This is my first go through, and I think they're fabulous. Okay. I also wanted to touch on ... There was a brand new article on Bari Weiss's Substack this morning. We're recording this on, gosh, Thursday, the 10th of February. She has a guest post and the title is, What The Truckers Want. I just wanted to read a little bit because, again, I feel like there's ... And probably not our listeners. I feel like probably the people that are tuned into our show, at least the people inside the Healthy Rebellion because we've had lots and lots of conversation about what's going on in Canada, in there, people understand what the truckers want. But I don't know. I feel like this just really is one of the first pieces that's really highlighting this., I think, in a way that the mainstream media should be covering it. But anyway ...

Nicki: So who are these truckers? They sound like Ivan, 46, who immigrated with his wife, Tatiana, from Ukraine, to build a life in New Brunswick and Eastern Canada. "We came to Canada to be free, not slaves," he said. "We lived under communism. And in Canada, we're now fighting for our freedom." BJ Dichter, a spokesman for the Freedom Convoy, is vaccinated. And he estimates that many, maybe most of the truckers at the protest are too. He says, "I'm Jewish. I have family in mass graves, in Europe. And apparently I'm a white supremacist," he told me Wednesday. Ostensibly, the truckers are against a new rule mandating that when they reenter Canada, from the United States, they have to be vaccinated. But that's not really it. The mandate is a moot point. The Americans have a similar requirement. Anyway, the vast majority of Canadian truckers, according to the Canadian Trucking Alliance, are vaccinated.

Nicki: So it's about something else, or many things. A sense that things will never go back to normal, a sense that they're being ganged up on by the government, the media, big tech, big pharma. It's hard to capture how thoroughly Trudeau has misjudged the moment. And the author quotes Trudeau, "This pandemic has sucked for all Canadians," he said Monday. "As for the protest, it has to stop," declared the prime minister. If he sauntered down to the mess of rigs on Wellington Street, across from the Parliament

building, opposite the mall and the war memorial, if he talked to these people for a few minutes, he would understand. It will not stop. What's happening in Canada right now is bigger than the mandates. The whole piece is good. We'll link to it in the show notes, and again, on Bari Weiss's Substack this morning.

Nicki: Another piece I want to share, and I shared it in the Rebellion last week, when it came out. This was published on Natural Selections, Heather Heying's Substack. If you listen to Dark Horse, you probably heard Heather share a bit from this story in their episode last week. It's a story written by a mother, about her daughter who died early last year, due to the circumstances of the pandemic. She died by suicide. And the story is heartbreaking. It tells of a young woman who was just one of the most beautiful and ... I'm sorry. I know the mom, and it's just ... I guess, all I want to say is, I hope you read this story because her mother can tell it far better than I can. And there are so many beautiful kids out there that are struggling. When I shared this inside the Healthy Rebellion, lots of parents spoke up and said, "I fear this for my kid."

Nicki: So the truckers, what they're doing in Canada, it's not just about the mandates. It's about two years of restrictions and lockdowns, and the complete tamping down on life and hope for many people in our world, especially the places like Canada and Australia, and New Zealand, and some of the more liberal states in United States who have had more draconian measures and more authoritarian type-

Robb: Response.

Nicki: ... response to this. Yeah, please read the story. It's definitely one that you'll need to have some tissues next to you, but the story of Mila, the story of this young woman needs to be shared because we cannot forget what has been done to our kids, to people like Mila, who prior to this, was at the least risk of ... She was not depressed. She had friends. She was so connected with nature and animals, and had goals and aspirations, and dreams. She was not at risk for this prior to these mandates and these lockdowns.

Nicki: Anyway, we'll link to that in the show notes. Please read it. And then as just to bookend this with the most callous and out-of-touch quote that Trudeau could possibly say this week, he says, "We all understand how frustrated everyone is. We're all tired of restrictions, mandates, having to make sacrifices. It's really tiring for all of us, but mandates are the way to avoid further restrictions. And this team is going to stay focused on doing exactly that." So mandates are the way to avoid further restrictions.

Robb: Oh, this is a t-shirt slogan from ... well-worn in history, by Mark Fry. That's what graces the entrance to Auschwitz. It is interesting. Another classic garing quote, I guess, is ... And I'm going to butcher this but, "Take what is being said about you and then turn it around, and say it about the other group." Just flip it on its head and ride that pony until the legs fall off. That's exactly what he's doing. Mandates are how you avoid further restrictions. And the interesting thing is that there are a non-trivial number of people who buy this.

Nicki: Mandates are freedom.

Robb: Brett Weinstein has an interesting interview with a senator from Australia, and they dig into some interesting stuff. Just cut me off here if I'm diverting us too far off the beaten path, but they talk a little bit about the difference in the formation of the United States versus Australia specifically. But I think that Canada, New Zealand would be somewhat similar. Those places didn't fight for their independence. It just happened over time, in slow birth or release out of the Commonwealth. Even though, I guess, they're still

technically part of the Commonwealth, and there's relationships there and everything. But the war for independence that established the United States, the people who signed their names on the Declaration of Independence, they signed their own death warrants. If that didn't work, they were done. They were going to swing from a yard arm or be shot, or both.

Robb: And then the ensuing formation of a country, out of that ordeal and out of the process of taxation without representation, of religious persecution. There was a lot of really interesting and unfortunately, all too unique stuff that went into the formation of the United States. Although Canada and Australia, and New Zealand have looked like the United States in some ways, Western liberal democracies, there's a passivity there that exists because they're not founded on struggle, not in the same way that the United States was. This was a good discussion between Brett and this senator, but it went on to make the case ... And the Senator is interesting. He would be, I think, here in the United States, considered a center, left, moderate. And I think in Australia, he's like Alex Jones practically there, virtually uber right wing there, because the political spectrum is so different. But he estimates that 70, 80% of people are okay with the way that things have played out.

Robb: One of the quid pro quos that emerged out of this whole story was, if you're vaccinated and you wear a mask, and you do this, and you do that, we'll let you have, pretty much, free reign above and beyond that so long as, every time you leave your house, you buy gasoline, there's a QR code, you scan the QR code, and then it tells you to put your face in front of the camera, and then you put your face in front of the camera, and then it documents that you are who you are and where you're claiming to be. Nicki and I were talking about this. And for me, I think I would almost do a firing squad before doing this. This is a level of invasiveness that is above and beyond what they had, in Australia, had felt was acceptable for felons, for convicted felons didn't have this degree of-

Nicki: Wow.

Robb: ... of interface into their lives. But on this topic, people, when queried about this, they're like, "It's not a big deal. I'm cool with this. And then I just go about my life."

Nicki: And you see people comment on different posts regarding, particularly, this Canadian Trucker Convoy, the folks that are against it. And they feel like what the truckers are doing, it's this huge movement to take away their ability to be safe. Like, why don't they just get vaccinated? And it's so crazy to me because the vaccines don't keep you safe. At what point can that be something that everybody gets? They're leaky. They've been leaky from the beginning. We've known it shortly thereafter. If you have the vaccine, you can still catch COVID. You can still transmit COVID. And no, there's no asymptomatic spread, which was honestly, I think, the most damning thing that the media did to us in the very beginning, was that.

Nicki: And I guess it was somebody in Germany that, Christian Drosten or something, that originally put that forth, that there was this asymptomatic spread, because then, of course, you're terrified of everybody. You look healthy, but you might be carrying the plague. So get away from me. I don't want to be near you. Because otherwise, it's like, okay, we have this thing. If you're sick, stay home. If you're healthy and you look healthy, you can be out in public. The fear wouldn't have been there. But that asymptomatic spread thing, I think ... I don't know. I feel like it just-

Robb: And it's been interesting listening to say, Brett and Heather. I just so appreciate them because they are an open book so much in, here's what I was thinking, here's what I'm

now thinking. And they've been pretty forthright in talking about out, oh, this is what conservatives have been concerned about and call a slippery slope. It looks like this trivial thing, but it opens this door that is very hard to put things back in, to put genie's back in bottles. This was my big concern around the Patriot Act, way back when I was being called anti-American for suggesting that ... Destroying what was then, effectively, our fourth amendment rights, this-

Nicki: Search and seizure.

Robb: ... search and seizure, which just gone, compared to what it was previously. And this thing has been weaponized under this circumstance, in a remarkable way, being saber-rattled around parents concerned about school board meetings and being able to express themselves at school board meetings. And then being threatened with domestic terrorism status, which we'll circle back around to that in a minute. I really don't spend much time on social media, but there are a few outlets, like Knee Over Toes Guy and Squat University, and a couple of things that I like to just jump in and check them out every couple of days, and see what they've been talking about. But I noticed on Sean Baker's timeline, he had a news clip that was basically, people are going to therapy now for stress induced around climate change fear. And there's this move to have a ICD10 designation for the mental health concerns around climate change. I promise you-

Nicki: How are we so fucking weak as a society? To me, it's like, okay, fuck. We have this looming thing, let's ... This is what I tell the kids all the time. Zoe came to me and she was really worked up about her piano note speller book. They have to do some written work with their piano, and she was just in a state. And I said, "You got to calm down. If you're this worked up over it, you're not going to be able to think clearly. There's a pattern here. You know how to find out which notes are which. But if you're all worked up, it's just a giant mess, and you're just going to fluster yourself. And you're not going to be able to see clearly." And it's the same fucking thing. Like yes, there are situations with the climate that need addressing, but getting ... I don't even know where I want to go with this.

Nicki: It's just like, okay, if I die from a glacial melt, tidal wave, yes, I would like to be clearheaded and think, how can we do the things that we need to do to make this so that we have lots of future generations that can live on this planet and be sustained, and all of that. But becoming so depressed that I can't function and I need to be diagnosed with climate induced depression? We're so unresilient as humans, if this is a thing.

Robb: And this is, I mean, codling of the American mind. There's so many examples of this stuff, but ... And I've mentioned this in previous shows. I had a person that I thought was a friend suggest that I was likely a Holocaust denier when I suggested that we needed a nuanced approach to looking at climate change, because we had just discovered that shellfish produced huge amounts of methane. It's a very dangerous, slippery slope to just get wrapped around the axle of, you see greenhouse gas emissions and you freak out. Like, okay, what's the context? And what does this really mean, if there are all these biogenic sources of greenhouse gases? Is that good? Is that bad? We don't know. The interesting thing is when you really read the science. And this is where David Koonin's book, Unsettled, is fascinating. The worst, worst, worst case scenarios that are being predicted by the climate scientists are nothing like what is being portrayed in the media. What's being portrayed in the media is hysterics, and at a magnitude that people-

Nicki: The world's going to end in however many years.

Robb: The world is going to end in however many years. And what's funny is there've been religious sects and leaders that have said the world is going to end on this date. And everybody gets all ready and they have their hymnals, and they get together. The world doesn't end and they feel chagrined, and they get in and do some scratching neurology.

Nicki: Oh, we were wrong. It's five more years from now.

Robb: Yeah. It's five more years away. This has happened multiple times now around the climate change topic. Glaciers are definitely receding in Glacier National Park. Weather patterns are absolutely changing, but the park now has to go through and spend a remarkable amount of money updating signs there, because the signs said that all of the glaciers would be gone by 2020. Now we're two years down range from that, and all of the glaciers are not gone. Now they may end up being gone at some point, but it's ... Fuck. My whole point to that is that when we loop back around to 70% of people, say in Australia and New Zealand ... I don't know if these numbers are accurate, and one of the numbers that was thrown out there is that this was more younger folks that were of the opinion that we don't need democratic institutions, that those are dangerous because there's too much slop, too much wiggle in the whole process there, for those to be reasonable.

Robb: But we have a situation right now where people are willing to forego what I see as being remarkable swaths of their own personal liberty and freedom, so that they're buying some degree of perceived freedom with a huge loss of other freedom, because the state knows where you are, what you're doing at all times. You'll get in trouble. If you forget your cell phone and you go to buy gas, you're going to get in trouble. You're going to get, at a minimum, the cops knocking on your door. They talked about a young woman who was walking with a young man whose motorcycle had run out of gas. And he apparently was COVID positive. They identified both of them from facial recognition software in the license plate on the motorcycle. She ended up in a detention center for two weeks, and there was no due process.

Robb: That situation couldn't happen in the way that it did, if she had shot someone. There would at least have been some due process in that. And this can and will be morphed into the climate change topic. I fucking promise you, it's already happening, even in the World Economic Forum stuff. They just interchangeably use climate change, pandemic, and racism, systemic racism. Just rinse, lather, repeat, interchangeably. And again, to your point, do we need to do things about racism? Yes. Do we need our eyes open and be clearheaded about how we tackle climate change? Yes, absolutely. This is not the way that you do it, by just destroying these basic individual freedoms and-

Nicki: You brought up the World Economic Forum and it just reminded me of something I learned this week, which I wasn't unaware of. But Trudeau and ... What's her name? Jacinda?

Robb: Merkel?

Nicki: No, no, no. Jacinda, the Australian.

Robb: Oh, right.

Nicki: And Merkel actually, in Germany, were all part of, I'm going to butcher the name, part of the World Economic Forum young leader thing. They've been groomed and stewarded for decades.

Robb: Decades.

Nicki: So that's an interesting fun fact. And then just to wrap this up, because I remember that I had taken a screenshot of a quote that I wanted to put in this episode, and I forgot. But I just remembered, because I think it's super, just telling. And it circles back to, what is the narrative that's acceptable and whatnot, with regards to protests? And in December of 2020, AOC had said, "The whole point of protesting is to make people uncomfortable. Activists take that discomfort with the status quo and advocate for concrete policy changes. Popular support often starts small and grows. To folks who complain, protest demands make others uncomfortable. That's the point." So it's okay to protest in some circumstances, but not in others.

Robb: Well, there was a great Babylon Bee piece that it ... I think it was, truckers play 40 chess, begin looting Best Buys and setting fires so that GoFundMe will release their funds.

Nicki: Will release their funds. Yeah. It's pretty good one. Babylon Bee has it made, or spot on, I guess.

Robb: It's the most credible news source around, apparently.

Nicki: All right. This Salty Talk episode of the Healthy Rebellion Radio's sponsored by our salty AF company, LMNT. LMNT electrolytes are perfect for anyone eating a keto or low carb diet, anyone who fasts, trains hard, works hard, breastfeeding moms, anyone with pots, leg cramps. All of these scenarios. People benefit from more sodium, and LMNT makes that easy and tasty. I will let you all know that we're officially sold out of mint, chocolate, salt, chocolate, mint, salt. But that will probably be back next winter or this coming winter. And I'd like to encourage you all to give a salt, with the LMNT Give A Salt program, that you nominate your everyday heroes, coaches, teachers, first responders, firefighters, cancer fighters, anyone who's making a difference in your life and who could use a little bit of salt.

Nicki: You nominate them and LMNT will hydrate them. You can do that at drinklmnt.com/giveasalt. That's drink, L-M-N-T.com/giveasalt. We've talked a lot about that first talking point so I know this is going to be a little bit of a longer episode, but we'll migrate now into our vitamin D section.

Robb: I'll be quick with this. I have links to these. And the only real point here, if folks remember from the last episode, I talked about the person that popped up on my Facebook timeline. And I was making the case that we're still seeing no messaging out of our public health officials around vitamin D status, as an example. Say nothing of metabolic health and working out, and getting healthy, and all that. There's still nothing. These are two papers from 2018, so ostensibly, before all of this shit became hyper politicized. And it deals with influenza, which is a different disease and viral vector than a COVID, clearly. But there's a lot of overlap here.

Nicki: This is my other study. You need to scroll down.

Robb: Oh, okay. Okay. Well, do you want to talk about that other one first?

Nicki: Yeah, yeah. There's a new one that just came out.

Robb: Okay. Let's talk about it.

Nicki: And it's in the journal, Plos, P-L-O-S. Pre infection, 25 hydroxy vitamin D3 levels and association with severity of COVID-19 illnesses. So these are people who had their vitamin D3 level, had records of that prior to getting a COVID infection. A lower vitamin D status was more common in patients with a severe or critical disease, if vitamin D was less than 20 nanograms per milliliter, than in individuals with mild or moderate disease. Patients with vitamin D deficiency, so again, less than 20 nanograms per milliliter, were 14 times more likely to have severe or critical disease than patients with vitamin D3 levels greater than 40 nanograms per milliliter. Among hospitalized COVID-19 patients, pre infection deficiency of vitamin D was associated with increased disease severity and mortality.

Robb: So a really important piece. We've sung many a praise of Vinay Prasad throughout this pandemic. Vinay is pretty sanguine on the-

Nicki: Use of supplements, whether it's vitamin D3 or any other supplement in treating COVID.

Robb: Yeah. Yeah. So it's worth throwing that out there. Not everybody is on team vitamin D. I do think that Vinay has the wrong of this. He is definitely in the evidence based camp, such that there's nothing that can be learned without a randomized control trial, seemingly, or a significant inference. Again, this is what I was talking about. Apologies, I got ahead of myself. Two pieces, preventative effects of vitamin D on seasonal influenza A in infants. High dose, vitamin D is suitable for the prevention of seasonal influenza as evidenced by rapid relief from symptoms, rapid decreases in viral loads and disease recovery. In addition, high dose, vitamin D is probably safe for infants because this has actually been well studied. They're using about 1,200 IUs in these infant models, so this is an intervention where they actually looked at viral loads and disease progression, and whatnot. Very, very low risk of downside.

Robb: And then the other one with this is a baseline serum. Vitamin A and D levels determined benefit of oral vitamin A and D supplements to human immune responses, following pediatric influenza vaccination. So early in this whole story, I dug up a number of papers that looked at different types of vaccines and the relative efficacy that you, one, experienced at varying degrees of vitamin D status. And it appeared that better vitamin D status conferred better immune response, and this is largely what we see from this. The findings, overall, our study demonstrates that vitamin A and D supplementation can improve immune responses to vaccines when children are vitamin A and D insufficient at baseline.

Robb: So if you have sufficient vitamins A and/or D, you're probably not going to get a huge boost or improvement in efficacy of vaccines above and beyond that. But if you are insufficient, and the fact that both A and D are huge immune modulators, then it makes a pretty good case that you're going to get a better response. So yet again, whether you're on, get a vaccine, don't get a vaccine, which we and so many people are just saying, "Let's just make that an option," either way, your vitamin A, vitamin D ... Let's just focus on vitamin D. Vitamin D status is a huge factor in, not only the likelihood of getting some sort of severe illness from influenza or COVID, but if you decide to get vaccinated against these diseases, the efficacy of the vaccine largely hinges on your vitamin D status. And this is still not a single plank of the public health platform that we have, which is criminal, in my mind. It's like, where is that? And it's so ... If your silence is violence, what the fuck is this? It really is injuring people to not talk about this.

Nicki: It's not misinformation, because the information's ... Well, actually it is because they've actually demonized it and said that it doesn't do anything. And this ties into our next

topic, which is a newly released advisory bulletin from the Department of Homeland Security. Want to click on that link?

Robb: Not really, but here goes.

Nicki: This was issued on February 7th of this year. A summary of terrorism threat to the US Homeland. The United States remains in a heightened threat environment, fueled by several factors, including an online environment filled with false or misleading narratives, and conspiracy theories, and other forms of mis/dis and mal information, which they have the acronym, MDM, introduced and/or amplified by foreign and domestic threat actors. These threat actors seek to exacerbate societal friction to so discord and undermine public trust in government institutions, to encourage unrest, which could potentially inspire acts of violence.

Nicki: While the conditions underlying the heightened threat landscape have not significantly changed over the last year, the convergence of the following factors has increased the volatility, unpredictability, and complexity of the threat environment. Factor one is the proliferation of false or misleading narratives, which sow discord or undermine public trust in US government institutions. Two, continued calls for violence directed at US critical infrastructure, soft targets and mass gatherings, faith-based institutions such as churches, synagogues, and mosques, institutes of higher education, racial and religious minorities, government facilities and personnel, including law enforcement and the military, the media and perceived ideological opponents. And three, calls by foreign terrorist organizations for attacks on the United States based on recent events. That's a mouthful.

Robb: What do you want to say about that? I mean, I have some thoughts, but ...

Nicki: Well, first of all, the thing that first jumps out at me is this spell word, conspiracy theory, up at the top, which most of the conspiracy theories of 2020 have proven to be true. And we're just wrapping up vitamin D, lots of people have recommended vitamin D in the treatment and prevention of COVID. That would be considered mis/dis and malformation. So I guess, this is anybody.

Robb: It is anybody. It is literally anyone.

Nicki: Anybody who says anything that goes counter to whatever the narrative du jour is, can be considered a terrorism threat to the United States Homeland.

Robb: Where do I want to go with this? Science changes. We learn new things. And this is one of the-

Nicki: Science is not settled.

Robb: Science is not settled. It is, again, backing up in some rarefied areas. If you know the gauge of a copper wire and you know how much electricity you run through it, we can, with remarkable precision and accuracy, predict the electro and magnetic forces that are going to be associated with that. Turning it into electromagnet, the amount of heat that it will generate. We have remarkable predictive models around things. We might discover something new, but there's not a ton of wiggle room there. Chemistry, physics, engineering. It's not done, but ... And I've talked about this. Again, we're not still not 100% sure what gravity even is. Is it a dent in space time? Are there gravimetric particles that move? Maybe it's both, or maybe I haven't been out of this long enough that we do have that buttoned up better. But when we start getting into complex systems, it

doesn't mean that physics goes away. It doesn't mean that chemistry goes away, but we start layering complexity in a way that's very difficult to stay on top of.

Robb: It's so reminiscent of, I think it was Paul Krugman in 2007. In talking about the leveraged risk that the financial institutions experienced prior to the implosion of the 2007, 2008 housing market, he said that risk had been vanquished. And this was bullshit. It was complete bullshit. If you just package risk into these arcane, mortgage back securities, and entrench them all up in these ways that are almost impossible to follow, it doesn't mean that there's not still risk in a system. It's just super complex, and almost nobody knows what is going on with it. And it's similar with science where maybe vitamin D is a bone for COVID, maybe it's not.

Robb: The influenza pandemic of 1918 had a U curve with regards to ... The high morbidity mortality was the opposite of what we would normally expect. It was relatively young, healthy people, but not very young and not very old. The median age of death was 28. It was very counterintuitive. And they think it was a cytokine storm, so maybe vitamin D would've been helpful with that. But even in those situations, in theory, it's younger folks that would be out, working and whatnot. But it was during war time, so it was all the shit, but it was really counterintuitive. Those things happen. And if you can't have good, open discussion around what's going on, you'll never get to the bottom of it. And lots more people will die, lots more bad decisions will be made. And we're at this spot now where I think we are probably, according to this Homeland Security thing, probably domestic terrorists at this point.

Nicki: Right. Anybody who has any question. But hey, I'm reading this in an interesting way, and tell me if I'm just totally off base, but these threat actors seek to exacerbate societal friction to sow discord and undermine public trust in government institutions, and encourage unrest. Couldn't Facebook and Twitter be that? They exacerbate societal friction, and their censorship sows discord. And the fact that they're censoring people even questioning what the government is saying, undermines public trust in government institutions. I mean, I think these social media companies also are a threat to the US Homeland.

Robb: By this definition, the algorithm that they use, which pits people against each other. Yeah.

Nicki: They are actively-

Robb: Without a doubt. And this is another one of these ironic pieces to all this. Where do you want to go with this one? I, mean-

Nicki: I don't know that we need to go anywhere else. I just want people to be aware that this was released a couple of days ago, and we will link to it in the show notes, and people can dig in. There's lots of conversation in different Subtacks about it. I just wanted to ...

Robb: And I'll just circle this back around, again, the science has never settled. Certain topics within chemistry and physics, and whatnot, engineering, we have remarkably tight, robust models that maybe we might go in another 100 years and we don't really improve elements of them. We have modeling that actually predicts the world. Then we have models like the Imperial College of London, which was horseshit. Climate change models which seem to have more error than signal in them, potentially. And discussing-

Nicki: If we can't have discussions, and back and forth, and hey, I like what you did there, but I'm questioning this component of your model here, wouldn't it be better if we did this? There's none of that.

Robb: It's not just none of that. You may become an enemy of the state for having that discussion.

Nicki: Well, I know, but the fact that this is completely lacking. I mean, they're thinking that there's these agents that are undermining public trust, but these institutions have done it to them themselves. It's pretty clear that-

Robb: Yeah. I mean, this is all clearly a shell game. This is like classic, funny enough, disinformation campaign. There have been declassified, CIA disinformation campaigns out of the 1960s, and this just quacks like those ducks and walks like those ducks. I guess, I'm trying to think of a way to put a bow on the end of this thing and be done with this episode. The thing that occurs to me is, when Brett was talking to this senator from Australia, the sense that comes out of what's going on with these erosions of freedom is just ... It's so multifaceted, divisive within society. And then when you further have this potential punitive action from the government, for even having a discussion around this, it really sets us up for a remarkably dangerous situation. And I guess that that's probably obvious. I'm not really adding all that much of value here, but this will get dovetailed into climate change again. Like, what we are eating ...

Nicki: Yep. If you don't do vegan Fridays and meatless Mondays, and-

Robb: Then you don't care about the planet and you're a horrible person.

Nicki: And if you ask questions about why we should, or isn't meat the most nutrient-dense food we can eat, then you're basically exacerbating societal friction and sowing discord, and undermining public trust in the government.

Robb: Yeah. And that's where we are.

Nicki: And that's where we'll wrap up this episode. Thank you all for listening. Please check out our show sponsor, LMNT, for all your electrolyte needs. You can go to drinklmnt.com/robb to grab your value bundle. Buy three, get one box free. Again, that's drinklmnt.com/robb. And don't forget to give a salt. Nominate your everyday heroes at drinklmnt.com/giveasalt. We'll see you next week, guys.

Robb: Bye, everybody.