

The Public Square for October 2025

Attention Citizens!

Your humble servant is currently hard at work writing Video #89, and having a great time.

That may read as sarcasm but it's not, I'm genuinely having a great time.

What I'm working on began as an 8-10 minute section in the Work video. I cut this section all the way back in 2023 because it was a pretty long detour and it was not directly related to the subject at hand. But now in 2025 I've finally come back around to it, and over the last month I've done a lot of work fleshing it out.

Just to give you an idea of how the writing works, I've looked back over each previous draft and done some crude math to figure out how long each would have been in video form.

The "bones" of what I took from the Work video was about 8-10 minutes.

Draft 1, the first real draft with all of the additional research slapped on, was 23 minutes.

Draft 2 was 30 minutes.

Draft 3 was 33 minutes.

Draft 4 was 36 minutes.

Draft 5 was a big breakthrough, I finally figured out some structural problems, switched the order of a bunch of stuff, and added some new sections. By the end of Draft 5 it was 51 minutes.

I'm currently working on Draft 6, and at this current moment it's sitting at about 49 minutes.

Going forward, each draft should get shorter. My expectation for the final draft is that it will be 30-something minutes.

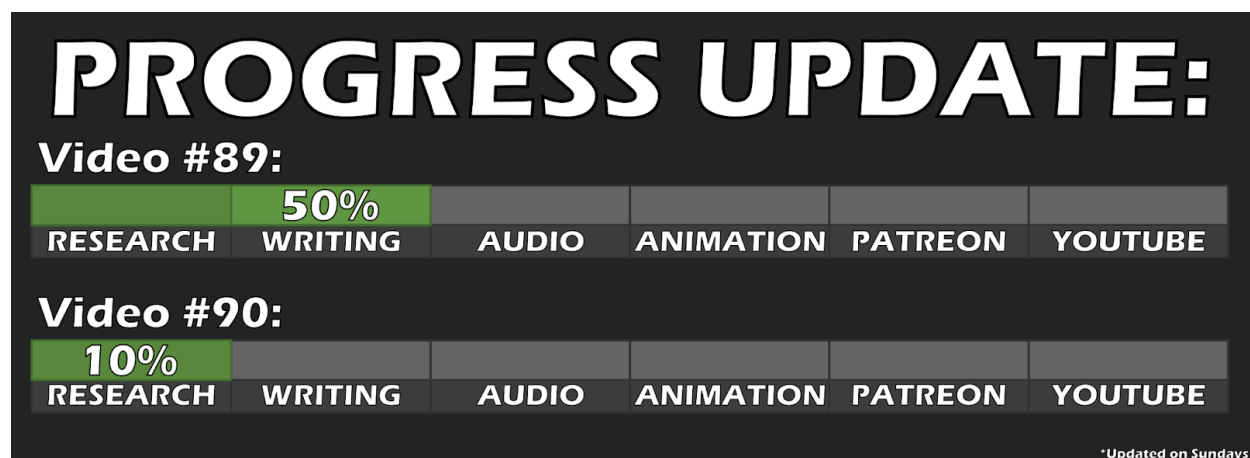
The reason for this is interesting. I find that whenever I'm struggling to explain something, I will often take 3 different swings at it. It often looks like this: there will be a first attempt which will be way too broad and vague, a second attempt which will have a lot more detail or data to back it up, and a third attempt that tries to combine the two into one complete statement. People often do this conversationally as well, and now that I've pointed it out you'll definitely notice it. In fact, in a way, I've even done it in this paragraph.

You'll even notice this in YouTube videos. I see it a lot. "God, they've been repeating the same point for 90 seconds, please move on."

I'm as guilty as anybody, I do this naturally when I'm writing. I've learned to just allow myself to be repetitious up front so that I can get all of my thoughts onto paper. After that, the key is to revise **a lot**, and to try to whittle down my long rambling paragraphs into a few complete sentences.

This means that my scripts tend to grow long at first, but then they shrink again once they start to mature. That's how a "breakthrough" in Draft 5 leads to an extremely long 51 minute script. But I know that all of the new writing that I added is extra long, and that it'll shrink naturally as I continue to edit.

My current draft has finally begun to shrink in length, which means that I'm officially exiting the "discovery" phase and entering into the "maturing" phase. Today I'm calling that 50% done, but truthfully I don't know, it'll be done whenever it's done.



Books I've Recently Enjoyed:

- **A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century, by Barbara Tuchman (1978)**
 - Tuchman is the GOAT. Obviously **The Guns of August (1962)**, her book about the lead up to World War 1, is her masterpiece. But despite being a massive Tuchman fan, I had shamefully never bothered to pick up **A Distant Mirror (1978)**, and naturally, it's great.

The one event that dominates 14th century Europe is the Black Death in 1347, and everything else kinda flows from there. I guess I had never realized that the [Western Schism](#) happened immediately after the Black Death, and the way that Tuchman frames it suggests that the massive psychological trauma created by the Black Death fundamentally changed how people approached their own religion, even 30 years later. I had never thought about it in that way, but it made sense to me.

She also points out how there was a rise in “bad behaviour” and disorder and lawlessness after the Black Death, and that this “bad behaviour” persisted for the rest of the century. It kinda made me think. We saw our own version of “bad behaviour” immediately after Covid, it never really occurred to me that the “bad behaviour” might persist for decades into the future. Is the other shoe going to drop 20 years from now? What a chilling thought.

Also, this might be embarrassing, but I will admit that before reading this book I never really knew what [The Peasant's Revolt](#) was. Oh boy, I learned a lot. I could easily imagine making a video on it some day. Not planning on it currently, but it's been added to my giant list of ideas for future videos.

Films I've Recently Enjoyed:

- **F for Fake (1973)**
 - I always need to have a little “project” going on, and my current project is a deep dive into Orson Welles. Books, documentaries, television appearances, and obviously his films. I think I saw **F for Fake (1973)** 15 years ago, but I barely remembered anything about it. To summarize it briefly, it's like... a visual essay about art, told through Welles as an unreliable narrator. He opens the movie by describing himself as a liar and a fraudster, so it's never 100% clear what is literally true and what was invented for the film. Halfway in, I realized that I had a big stupid smile on my face, it's such a fun and creative idea.

Welles made this movie when he was in his late 50s, and at the time he was going around telling people “I think I've invented a new type of film.” That's so exciting. Welles would live for another 12 years, but this would be his last “real” film released during his lifetime. Part of me wishes that he was able to make like 5 more films in this new genre that he invented, but as stands, **F for Fakes (1973)** is a 1 of 1, totally unique.

Music I've Recently Enjoyed:

- **We (2022) by Arcade Fire**

- One of the magical things about music is that it somehow changes in your brain as you continue to listen to it. **We (2022)** by Arcade Fire kinda bounced off of me when it first came out, I remember thinking that apart from the opening, **Age of Anxiety I**, none of the songs really stood out from the rest. Looking back, I can't believe that that was my takeaway. This month, something clicked in my brain, and suddenly it's a "no skips" masterpiece. Sometimes it takes a couple of years (!!!) to get on an album's wavelength.

I think the trick that I missed the first time is that **We (2022)** really needs to be listened to all the way through. At the risk of being cheesy, the album is a complete experience. I really like a bunch of these songs now, but I don't like any of them as much as I like the album as a whole. In retrospect, the [track list](#) tries to push you in this direction with every song being like "Part 1 of X," but this all went over my head when I first listened to it, lol.

Right now I'm finding the high point of the album to be **End of the Empire I-III** and **End of the Empire IV (Sagittarius A*)**. I specifically remember listening to these songs in 2022 and being like "I don't get it, so what?" and now it's like... transcendent, it makes me very emotional.

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