

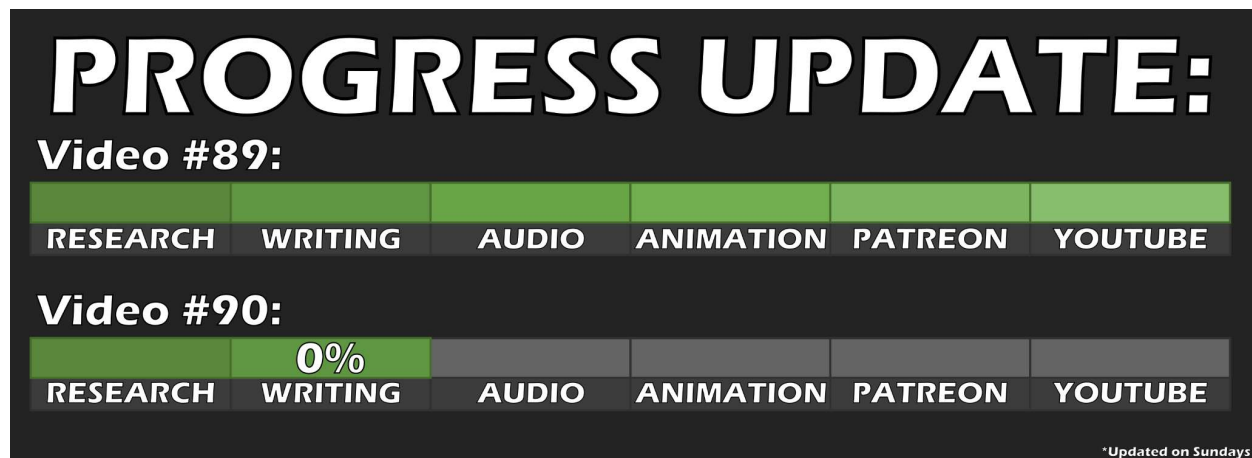
The Public Square for June 2026

Attention Citizens!

I finished my research for the next video in exactly the manner that I described last month. I was up to my neck in books, pretty sure that I was still a week or two to go, and LIKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNING I was like “wait, I know all of this already, I must have everything I need, I think I’m done.”

I spent the next day typing everything up and organizing my mess, and to my HORROR I discovered that I have over 10,000 words of notes. Over the years I’ve figured out that the videos come out at approximately 140 words per minute, which means that if I just read the notes straight it would be a 72 minute video. God damn. Job #1 is to find some efficiencies as I go, because ‘aint no way I’m putting out a 72 minute video. Remember, I’ve got to animate all of that! Yikes!

As of this moment I’ve written exactly zero words, I’m starting that tomorrow.



Questions and Answers:

I’ve decided to include a short little Q&A section in each newsletter going forward. If you’re interested, feel free to reply to this post with any questions or statements or topics or WHATEVER, and I’ll circle back to it in the next newsletter. I’m going to aim for like 3 per month.

Brendan Farrow asks... **“When you research, do you take notes with pen & paper, or do you use obsidian or anything like that. Is there a strict system?”**

Believe it or not I take all of my notes with a pen and paper. As I go, I don’t pay too much attention to keeping it chronological or anything like that, I don’t think about which bits belong where. If it belongs in the video, I just write it down.

Later, I go through every note I made and assign each note a letter (A, B, C...), so that I can group all similar notes together. Once that's done, I type all of that up so that it's easily searchable. Then, I figure out which order the sections go in, (E, B, A...) and then start writing it up.

I'm not sure that my notes are comprehensible to normal humans. I use abbreviations for absolutely everything, and sometimes symbols to represent people or places. I remember during the Roman Republic videos I would draw a triangle instead of writing Caesar, and draw a circle instead of writing Rome. It looks like absolute gibberish.

Evan Morgan asks... **“Which Roman leader and their policies do you think would be the most effective today?”**

One of the arguments that I make throughout the Rome series is that Julius Caesar is uniquely a genius, so my honest opinion is that if you drop him into any other period of history, he would still be remarkably effective.

But policies? That's a lot tougher. Virtually every Roman was a bloodthirsty, warmongering freak. I guess Cicero was the least freakish of the bunch, but even he had blood on his hands.

Tyler Hall asks... **“If you could change any one decision anyone has ever made in history. What decision/change of events do you think would most positively impact the world. (i.e. what if Caesar didn't cross the Rubicon, or what if Truman choose not to drop the bombs)”**

Oh, I IMMEDIATELY know the answer to this question. If I could change one event, I would do everything in my power to prevent World War One. Many people don't recognize this, but the 20th century was the most violent century in human history, and it's not even close. If you avoid World War One, you avoid the Russian Revolution, you (probably) have a less severe Great Depression, you avoid World War Two, you avoid the Chinese Civil War & the Chinese Revolution, and you avoid the entire Cold War. The only downside is that Britain's decline would have been much more gradual, meaning that decolonization probably would have taken longer. But aside from that, there would be virtually no downsides.

If the 20th century looked more like the 19th century, the first-order effects would be 200 million lives immediately saved, and then probably many more if you include the second-order effects of increased political stability and significantly less military spending over an entire century. Science would be further along, medicine would be further along, art would be further along, the benefits to the human race are almost incalculable.

It's the reason I'm particularly obsessed with the 19th century in my videos. World War One was a CATASTROPHE, and we are still dealing with its negative consequences. My boy Werner Herzog has said in his writing that "the 20th century, in its entirety, was a mistake." I agree!

The End.

Again, feel free to reply to this post with anything you want addressed in future newsletters!

Books I've Recently Enjoyed:

- **The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World Before the War, 1890-1914 (1966), by Barbara Tuchman**
 - Tuchman is the greatest to ever do it. I've had this book sitting on my shelf for years, but only got around to it now. This book is kinda a collection of eight "short stories" about late 19th and early 20th century Europe. The two sections on British politics were excellent, they were exactly my speed, I just ate them up. Learned way more than I ever cared to know about late 19th century opera, too. What a great writer, she's awesome.
- **The Jungle (1906), by Upton Sinclair**
 - Another book that I've been meaning to get to for like 3 years. All I knew about it was that it was the most well-known book by early 20th century socialist Upton Sinclair, and its popularity helped to pass some progressive food safety reforms under Teddy Roosevelt.

The Jungle (1906) was published serially in the newspaper before it became a book, and that's kinda how I read it, one short chapter every 2-3 days over several months. It follows a recent immigrant to Chicago as he experiences unbridled American capitalism for the first time. In every "issue," something terrible happens to him. His bosses scam him out of some of his wages. He is forced to send his wife and later some children to work, which he finds humiliating. He is forced to work longer hours for less. He learns about the fight for unions and worker's rights. He learns that elections are rigged. He is fired from his job. He is imprisoned. He becomes homeless and is forced to beg to survive. On and on and on, every new "issue" something bad happens, some new humiliation. But then, towards the end he learns about the socialist movement in the United States and his life is totally redeemed. I had no idea that this book ended with like a 20 page monologue about the virtues of socialism, I found it shocking and hilarious.

I fully expected **The Jungle (1906)** to be a “homework book,” more educational than pleasurable, but I was wrong, I loved it, it’s an all-timer.

I wrote down this quote in my little notebook because I liked it, thought I might pass it along.

“Perhaps the summertime suggests to you thoughts of the country, visions of green fields and mountains and sparkling lakes. It had no such suggestion for the people in the yards. The great packing machine ground on remorselessly, without thinking of green fields; and the men and women and children who were part of it never saw any green thing, nor even a flower. Four or five miles to the east of them lay the blue waters of Lake Michigan; but for all the good it did them it might have been as far away as the Pacific Ocean. They only had Sundays, and then they were too tired to walk. They were tied to the great packing machine, and tied to it for life.” - **The Jungle (1906)**

Films I’ve Recently Enjoyed:

- **sex, lies, and videotape (1989)**
 - I think this is the movie that made Andie MacDowell famous, and her career makes a lot more sense to me now, she’s excellent in this movie.
- **Witness (1985)**
 - The only movie I know of where a man gets murdered by grain.
- **Killers of the Flower Moon (2023)**
 - Still uncontrollably Scorsese-pilled.

Music I’ve Recently Enjoyed:

- **Lucius**
 - Re-listened to their entire discography. The harmonies are good, folks!

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