

RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR EP 243 TRANSCRIPT

Anand Giridharadas

Anand Giridharadas: When you mention the Gates money, I think one of the things that a lot of those folks don't realize is that they've done a lot of great work de-provincializing us in this country. They have given to Africa and done tremendous work in many African countries and they've given around the world. However, I think one of the things we're realizing under Orange Mussolini is that when America is rotting within, when you have so many people in this country convinced that this society is rigged and not working for them you actually end up electing a president who shatters the entire global order that all those African countries and countries around the world have to live in.

And I think there's a case to be made that those African countries that Gates and Buffett and others have helped would actually be in better shape if some of that philanthropy had not happened, but we also weren't living in the Trump era, because the Trump era is tearing up the entire global order that those countries hugely depend on for peace, stability, security, prosperity. So I think some of those folks who have done an amazing job giving money overseas need to be much more invested in making sure we're not failing here at home because when we fail here at home in America, the whole world suffers.

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour. My name is Steve Skrovan along with my co-host David Feldman. And I understand, David, this past week you were down in Texas with Triumph the Insult Comic Dog talking to Ted Cruz and Beto O'Rourke.

David Feldman: Yes, I got to see Ted Cruz and interesting thing, he went to Princeton undergrad and Harvard Law School. That's a toxic brew. Hi Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Well, I mean I did the same thing, David, so don't over-generalize. And I want to point out before we go on to the rest of our program that I just put out an article called "Democrats: Headline America Needs a Raise Now Before the Election". And the way the Democrats can get more lower-income people to vote is to tell them that they are able to vote for a raise long overdue. It's lucky for the big employers that they weren't required to give back pay so gutted by inflation and other derelictions of big business, the wage for millions of workers has become. Just go to vote for a long-overdue raise and vote for the candidate who will bring that to you. The minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour, frozen by the Congress and the White House. You can make a difference.

David Feldman: Remember when I used to ask candidates what the price of milk is? A great "gotcha question" should be ...

Ralph Nader: Yeah, they don't know.

David Feldman: What's the federal minimum wage? I doubt they can tell you.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. You know what their wage is, by the way? A hundred bucks an hour. That's if they work a 40-hour a week; they only work three days in Congress for most part and they spend it dialing for dollars in the afternoon.

Steve Skrovan: We have a truly fascinating show for you today. Our guest is Writer and Political Analyst, Anand Giridharadas. He has written a book entitled, WINNERS TAKE ALL: The Elite Charade of Changing

the World. He argues that we should not get too excited by the super-rich even the well-intentioned ones who devote considerable resources to changing the world, because most of them really don't want to seriously change the world that made them rich. It's not that they don't want to do good, it's just that the good they do is on the margins. They seem unwilling to change a system that does so much harm. And as always we will check in with our Corporate Crime Reporter, Russell Mokhiber and if we have time, we will continue our march through your listener questions.

But first, let's talk to someone who is able to penetrate the inner sanctums of the New Gilded Age. Anand Giridharadas is a writer and an on-air political analyst for NBC News and MSNBC as well as being a visiting scholar at the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute at New York University. He's a former columnist and correspondent for The New York Times, having written most recently the bi-weekly "Letter from America". His latest book is entitled, WINNERS TAKE ALL: The Elite Charade of Changing the World. Welcome to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour, Anand Giridharadas.

Anand Giridharadas: It's great to be with you. You know what Giridharadas rhymes with? Nothing, nothing.

Ralph Nader: Eventually see what reaction there has been to your book. I have a similar experience with the work of political fiction that I put out a few years ago called Only the Super- Rich Can Save Us, in quotation and it was a story about how a number of enlightened billionaires led by Warren Buffett in the fictional context, decide they're going to take a year off and change the country, top-down, bottom-up. And they organized and paid for organizers and clean election parties all kinds of strategies--all the way to Washington and the Congress and the White House. And Warren Buffett liked the book so much that he invited me out to have a book signing at his gigantic annual gathering of shareholders of Berkshire Hathaway.

So my experience has been that you get an interesting response from the enlightened rich people but when you put specific projects in front of them, for a variety reasons, they don't come forward. So Anand, what was the reaction of these philanthropists and these wealthy people to your book?

Anand Giridharadas: I have to tell you, Ralph, it's been somewhat astonishing to me. As you know, writing a book is a lonely endeavor. This is of course a reported book so I spent a lot of time out in the field with these people trying to understand what rich people are really doing when they say they are changing the world and I went to Silicon Valley and I spent time on that cruise ship so that your listeners wouldn't have to with those 3,000 entrepreneurs and I interviewed a variety of folks. But I also spent a lot of time by myself writing. And when I have come out into the world with the book, the biggest surprise to me has been the openness, not universal by any means. There's a lot of resistance to this book, but I expected a wall of resistance from the people that I am indicting. I expected pushback and defensiveness and there's been some of that, but there has been to my happy shock--a kind of openness to the idea that many of the richest and most powerful people in our age are standing on top of an indefensible mountain and they don't know how to get down. And it remains to tell whether they're sincere in their desire to get down from the indefensible mountain. But every day I'm hearing stories and I have kind of my network of little spies all around the country who tell me about these hilarious moments. Someone told me the other day, a friend walked into Susan Buffett's office who does a lot of philanthropy for Warren Buffett. And, you know, sees my book on Susan Buffett's desk and there's some conversation about like, well, I guess we got to deal with this now, don't we? And the other day someone, was at a Goldman Sachs event, in California I believe it was, and the founder of Chobani

Yogurt was asked what his favorite recent book was, and he said my book. And the Goldman Sachs interviewer very quickly moved on to what's your favorite food. And, Jack Dorsey from Twitter recently tweeted his to-do list, as he often does, and my book was on it. And I say that, not as the president would say, not in a braggadocios way, but because I am struck that actually thanks to the president, I believe, many privileged people are looking around at the society and realizing that if they are right in the assumptions they've held true for the last 30/40 years, this wouldn't have happened.

You only get Orange Mussolini when a lot of us were wrong in our basic assumptions, our worldview, our reflexes. And so I am here to tell you, having spent the last two months doing three or four events a day all around this country including with some of these plutocrats--there is an openness right now to a rethinking of our deeper systems that I have not seen in my lifetime.

Ralph Nader: What was it like going to the Aspen Conference and having the thoughts and articles and books that you've written; what kind of reactions did they give you?

Anand Giridharadas: You know, the whole notion and, you know, Aspen is one of these places, Davos is another, where the rich and powerful gather to do some combination of business networking and world-saving. And the two are very mingled. And they kind of live under this mantra of "doing well by doing good." So, you know, you and I might do a business deal together or we might also, you know, try to help Africa. We're not sure where Africa is but we might try to, you know, have my hedge fund and your private equity fund help Africa. So that's the kind of thing that goes on there. And, I, as a writer, as someone who's fundamentally attentive to language, above all, I am very attentive to silences and the language that cannot be spoken in different rooms.

And so I was invited into this Aspen fellowship, that's mostly designed for business people and they let a couple of rogues into every class of 20 or so people. I was one of those rogues. I'm not sure they're gonna keep doing that in the future. And what I observed when I kind of entered that world was, the silences around companies needing to pay more taxes to get a better world. In other words you could talk about changing the world and making the world a better place and teaching girls to code and helping Rwanda and malaria nets. But what could you not talk about--you couldn't talk about people doing the harm of tax avoidance. You couldn't talk about companies lobbying in Washington with millions of dollars in their bank accounts--lobbying for the kinds of policies that would hurt working people, and then turning around and running some initiative to like help 14 janitors' daughters go to school. You couldn't talk about the fact that many of the people in the fellowship were executives in these new Silicon Valley startups turned behemoths that were literally in the middle of building predatory monopolies that were destroying the media industry and starting to compromise our politics. But, instead of being asked to do their day jobs more honorably, to do less harm, people like that were asked, as part of their Aspen obligation, to do a little side project to like help some kids and give back a little. And I started to realize the fraudulence of this idea of giving back. And I started to become interested in the following question, which is, it's very clear and you've been such a leader in highlighting this, that basically working people and middle class people have been shut out of progress for the last 40 years. That is a scandal and it's a crime. The question is what is the relationship of all of this elite do-gooding to that crime? Is it merely that these rich people are trying, they're doing their best, but they're not getting there fast enough--they're not doing it as well as they could? It's a drop in the bucket. Is that the critique? I think that's a pretty normal critique one would hear. As I did the reporting, I came to a much darker conclusion, which is I don't believe it's the drop-in-the-bucket thesis.

I do believe what they do is a drop in the bucket, but more importantly, I believe that the elite do-gooding in which they engage is actually part and parcel of how we uphold the systems and structures and set of social arrangements that have caused working people and middle-class people to be shut out of the American dream for a generation. In other words, I believe the giving they do is the wingman of the continued taking and that the changing the world they do is the wingman of keeping their own status quo the same and that the generosity they do is the wingman of the injustice that they have no interest, deep down, in relinquishing.

Ralph Nader: Well, I asked some of these very wealthy people if they would enter the arena of action and fund activities that would help organize in congressional districts etc, not that they have to be managers of it, just that they would fund it on the grounds that justice needs a lot of things. And one of the things it needs is money to fund organizers and other expenses. And they just never seem to want to get into that arena, I think, because then they might get into the news and business relations might be damaged or they would be criticized. And I did this with people of substantial wealth and one of them, Carl Icahn, said, "Well, you know, Ralph, I have a foundation and its guidelines cover education and children." Well, we always get this reaction. It doesn't meet the guidelines, the proposals are outside our guidelines.

Well, who makes the guidelines? It's the very people who say it doesn't meet our guidelines. They could always change it but they don't. Nick Hanauer is a near billionaire in Seattle. He is a small think-tank and he writes great articles for Politico and other outlets on the necessity to raise of minimum wage. And it's basically a communication to his peer group and he's saying what, are you crazy? You don't want to raise the minimum wage. That's what increases consumer demand, greater sales, more jobs, more profits and that's the way our economy was built. How can you not want to raise the inflation-gutted minimum wage which is now frozen at the federal level at \$7.25? And he adds this, he said, "You know, if we keep pushing the standard of living down against people and not giving them the opportunity to make more money, I think what we'll be seeing are pitchforks," However, when I mentioned to Nick Hanauer that it would take a certain amount of money to lobby the minimum wage through Congress, not that much, actually. I think it could be done for \$100 million--just think of the trillions of dollars in the following decade of desperately needed money by tens of millions of American low-paid workers, service workers, home healthcare workers and so on. And he didn't show any interest in contacting his wealthy colleagues and getting it done. And so that's the puzzle we have with these enlightened philanthropists.

Anand Giridharadas: And that's such an important point because one of the things that found-- the obvious critique of what you're saying right now, or what I argue in WINNERS TAKE ALL, is that what's so bad about trying to do good? I mean isn't it better than buying a yacht? Isn't it better than helping out in some small way—in the way that Icahn proposes? And here is the response, growing out of your story. When the rich and powerful get involved in social change, they don't lurk in the back row of social change. They sit in the front row. They climb up on stage. They get on the board of directors of Social Change Inc. They control the airwaves. They give TED talks about it. They write books about their theories of giving. And they start to signal jam our culture's conversation about what change is.

And so the kind of idea you might have, as Ralph Nader, about how change is made or the kind of theory that John Lewis might have about how change is made or the kind of theory Catherine MacKinnon might have about how change is made is drowned out and overwhelmed by the winners' winner-friendly

theories of how change is made, which is that it's made in ways that don't hurt winners. It's as if we had to do civil rights in a way in which white people were in charge of it. It's as if the Women's Suffrage Movement were required to be run entirely by men. That is what we are doing on this kind of third and related supremacy of capital supremacy. We talk about white supremacy and male supremacy in American life today, but there's a third supremacy that has allowed those other two supremacies to function in the way they do and that is capital supremacy.

Ralph Nader: Well, in any complex economy like ours, you have returns on capital like investments in the stock market and you have returns for labor. And in the last 40 years, the returns on capital have been outpacing the returns on labor in the overall economy, which means that you have increasing inequality and you have increasing transmission of the gains of the economy to the few at the top--say the 1%--at the expense of the 99% or the 90% at the bottom. And that's why people are hurt because they're really not getting back, in income, the value they deserve for their work. You can't tell me that when 90% of the gains in the last 10 years went to the top 1% that the top 1%'s contribution to the economy was anywhere near that of the bottom 99%. But that's the kind of inequitable mal-distribution we have. And that's what has to be changed.

Anand Giridharadas: And there's an enormous, you're absolutely right, and there's an enormous effort by the plutocratic class to convince us that that hurt is the product of forces rather than choices--that this is because of globalization, which sounds like just a thing that happened like the weather--it's because of, you know, changing technologies, it's because of this and that. Well, the reality is those are not just forces. Europe has encountered all of the same technological and global changes that the United States has in the last 30/40 years. It's had a very different experience of how those things affect regular people's lives because of policy. Policy is everything. It may not be sexy to some people but it's everything.

And the reality is--when you think about the rich and powerful giving to food banks, and on every major issue that you and I could talk about in American life--it is actually fairly obvious what real reform would look like. It's pretty obvious that we need to tax rich people, inheritances and large corporations more than we do. It's pretty obvious that we need to stop having so many Americans sit as they do in those campaign videos around kitchen tables looking at their healthcare bills and thinking and talking about them, and actually just take that issue off the table so they can focus on things like raising their kids and starting their businesses and doing whatever it is that they want to do with their lives. It's pretty obvious that we need to reinvent labor protection for the age of the Uber driver and the Amazon warehouse and, the tech revolution and AI (artificial intelligence) and all of that. So those things are all areas where it's obvious that we need large reform and what the winners do is they don't ignore those issues, or for example, the issue of the need to empower women and bring them more fully into the labor force in a way that they're not going to get groped every day. On all these issues we know what real reform would look like. But what the winners do is they step into those arenas. They don't ignore the desire for change, but they proffer a kind of light facsimile of change as an alternative on each of those issues. So, okay, I see that you're angry about the American dream; let's not do equal public schools for everybody because that would make my schools in Greenwich less good. But let's do one charter school in my neighborhood with my name on it, or on women's empowerment, let's not do maternity leave in social policy for women that would actually empower them but let's do lean in and just tell women to make sexism their own problem. The winners are determined to seem like they're offering change but it's often really just fake change.

Ralph Nader: You know, we all grow up in elementary school and it's drummed into us America's number one, number one in this, number one in that in the world and America is nowhere near number one in many areas. It has the highest rate of child poverty in the entire Western world by a lot. It's probably number 20th now in average wages. It has the highest number of people in jail per capita in the Western world by a lot. And it's probably 20th or 22nd ranked in terms of our healthcare system and infant mortality. So we have to get over this America's number one because that's what keeps us from learning or wanting to learn from other countries, because on top, what can we learn from foreign countries? Well, obviously, we can learn a lot because Western Europe was destroyed after World War II; they picked themselves up with the labor unions and the cooperatives and a multi-party system and they gave to all their people tuition-free higher education, a higher average wage than we have to all the people, better pensions for more people than we have in our country, at least four-week paid vacation, universal healthcare for everybody, better maintained public services like public transit and parks, and they have better labor laws protecting labor. And we don't have any of this for all the people. We even have federal employees that go on maternity leave and it's not paid maternity leave from federal agencies in the US government. That's how far behind we are our Western allies including Canada and that's how much we have to learn from them if we stop being so arrogant in the way we educate our young to think that we're not the best when we're not the best in many important ways!

Anand Giridharadas: Well hold on, Ralph, are you saying, are you saying there are other countries besides the United States? I did not know that.

Ralph Nader: Spoken like a true first-generation immigrant, Anand.

[Laughter]

Ralph Nader: Look at how easy it is to make important changes in this country that have to be accomplished by the Congress. Congress is the smallest branch of government. It's the most powerful branch of government. It's a branch of government whose members we know their names; 100 Senators/435 Representatives. If there's one thing they want more than corporate campaign cash, it's your votes. So if we have let's say, \$5 billion to organize over a 36-month period transcending one election in every congressional district--full-time people, part-time volunteers and a real ability to spend money to mobilize people to get out to vote. Here's what we would get. Almost certainly, for \$5 billion, we'd get a living wage up around \$15 an hour. We would get universal health insurance for everybody. We would have a transformed tax system (most people are disgusted with the complexity and inequity and special privileges for the few of the tax system). We would get criminal justice reform--at least what could be accomplished at the federal level dealing with prisons and prosecutorial abuses and conditions that bias the criminal law against minorities and low-income people. And you can throw in auditing the Pentagon, which would save billions of dollars a year because the Pentagon is violating Federal Law since 1992 and not presenting an audited budget to the Government Accountability Office, the accounting arm of the US Congress. Now for \$5 billion, we would save and transmit trillions of dollars to where they belong--trillions of dollars where they belong! And that's just \$5 billion, which is chicken feed given that we have billionaires in this country that have \$10 billion, \$20 billion, \$30 billion, \$70 billion all by themselves. Never mind the smaller fry where they're only worth a billion or two like on the Forbes 400. Now, can we find enough enlightened billionaires? Let's try to do this together in a project, Anand, because with your knowledge and the kind of reception you're getting for your book, WINNERS TAKE ALL, our experience in Washington, and the kind of guidance that's in this tongue-in-

cheek fable called HOW THE RATS RE-FORMED THE CONGRESS, plus our other documentation on how to get things through Congress, we can change the country! And if we get these changes, can you imagine what the future would beckon and how many more billionaires would begin to pay attention to the kind of country they would like to have their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren inherit?

Anand Giridharadas: I love the idea, but I love that we're turning this podcast into a telethon. And, you know, if you call now and act fast, I will donate a lock of my hair to everybody who donates a billion dollars or more. So I just want to extend that special offer right now. You know, but I think it's a very important point. I think it should not just come from you and me on the left. I think actually one should think about a commission to restore the American dream, and get some conservatives on there-- conservatives of goodwill (not people in Congress) who are passionate about social mobility in this country, about the idea of meritocracy actually working. And put together what are the four or five best ideas--breakthrough ideas--for making this country work again for most people in this country. And then doing that kind of effort. The one thing I want to say about your idea, because I think in my book there's a couple different aspects of my criticism. So I'm critical of rich people committing grave sins and using philanthropy to wash that away. I'm also critical of people, you know, doing little bits of change but avoiding the kind of systemic issues that you just addressed. So I love the idea of them getting involved in those issues. But the idea of getting them involved in those issues raises a third area where I'm also critical, which is I'm concerned about their level of influence over our democracy.

So even though I like those policy proposals, getting \$5 billion of philanthropic money to push those issues, would raise some of those concerns to me. And here's what would make me more comfortable. If those people did not get to lead in any way, the resultant movement. In other words, I believe we need to move to a place in America where you write checks to organizations that you like, but you don't sit on the board of them--you don't lead them, you don't advise them, you don't explain to them how to do their job. So on this initiative, I think if you were to do it, one of the things to role model would be this kind of money should be spent on people who are capable of doing this work on the ground; who are already doing this work and who need more resources. And what should not happen is, we have like the Lloyd Blankfein Labor Reform Fund, which ends up being run by Lloyd Blankfein and looking a lot like Lloyd Blankfein's self-interest and best ideas.

Steve Skrovan: I just wanted to ask, for as an historical perspective, back in the Gilded Age, the Rockefellers, the Carnegie's, the Mellons, did they change the world?

Anand Giridharadas: It's a great question, you know. I think the age we're in is very similar to the age we were in about a hundred years ago. And those folks you mentioned were not just philanthropists, they were the inventors of modern philanthropy as we know it. This kind of large, enormous giving, almost on a scale of what a government could do but done by private people, and it was in many ways what Carnegie in particular, who invented the idea that has become the underpinning of philanthropy and in some ways of wealth in America, which is that basically you do extreme taking, followed and justified by a period of extreme giving. And you are ruthless, i.e., you break unions, you don't pay people enough, you shoot the workers if they strike, if necessary, you avoid taxes if need be or whatever that's metastasized to become. And then in the time of grandchildren and reading glasses, you become a philanthropist. And I think part of what I am arguing and others as well--I read about Darren Walker at the Ford Foundation, who is very much trying to do this--I think the necessity today is to shatter the Carnegie consensus. He did some tremendous giving and one of the ways he did actually make change

was helping to seed the idea of libraries, and he did something that most philanthropists don't do today, which is that he gave privately to create libraries and then required local governments to commit to maintaining those libraries, so that he trained the government to do something that it wasn't doing that a small amount of philanthropy helped it learn to do on a much bigger scale. So that was good, but Carnegie also laid this foundation for the idea, that ex post facto giving justifies ruthless taking. And part of what I'm trying to shatter today is the notion that you can ruin the world, and then redeem it; that you can cause massive harm and then be a do-gooder. And I think it is no accident that the most idealistic large company in American history, Facebook, is also the first company in American history to tip possibly a presidential election. So idealism when it is kind of coded onto predatory companies is not our friend. It's a distraction that allows us to be ruled.

Ralph Nader: Years ago we did a book on DuPont in Delaware, Anand.

Anand Giridharadas: Yeah.

Ralph Nader: And it was just what you said. I'll send you a copy. They took huge amount out of Delaware and then they established a few foundations at what point they owned the two major papers in Wilmington, Delaware. And they gave back a pittance of what they took out. For example, they made sure that they paid very few property taxes in their vast land ownerships and industrial facilities. And then they turned around and had their foundations give back a fraction of that. That's what you're talking about.

Anand Giridharadas: Yeah and I mean, you know, the do-gooding always tends to be on a much smaller scale than the harm-doing. The reality is a lot of the harm that's being done by the wealthy in this country is with a B. in the billions of dollars of profit, and a lot of it is with an M in the millions.

David Feldman: What about the harm that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is doing? They're acting unilaterally without any Congressional oversight. They're making decisions for Africa and American public schools. I know we're out of time, but could you speak about that for a second?

Anand Giridharadas: Yeah, I think that the Gates example is an important one because it doesn't contain some of the problems that we see elsewhere in that you're not talking about someone who caused millions of people to be foreclosed on and lose their homes. You're not talking about someone who caused an opioid crisis and is covering up the harm they're doing, so some of those issues are off the table. I think the issue that is very much on the table is the question of the exercise of power, which is exactly what you're raising. And you know there's a guy at Stanford, Rob Reich, who talks about the fact that philanthropy is an exercise in power. And any exercise in power needs to be greeted with skepticism, not gratitude. So we can be grateful for the kindness of the Gates Foundation but as you say even in doing what they see as the good, whether it's in Common Core and public schools and pushing particular ideas that they think are the right ideas in education, or going to other countries with weak governance systems and pushing them in. Even if they're doing the right thing, even when it's the best possible scenario, it is an exertion of power over public life that should make any freedom-loving person worry. And if the worry turns out to be misplaced, that's fine, that's what worry is for. But it is a little absurd to me that in this country we are so worried about fantasy government overreach that's never going to happen--the government coming for your guns, the government invading your freedom to work by taxing you too much or the right-to-work states and all. We have this fantasy idea that the government has too much power. And at the same time, you have private actors who are ruling us

privately and making public decisions privately. And we simply don't have the same kind of anguish about it ---

David Feldman: What about perpetuating the myth that private industry can do things more efficiently than government can?

Anand Giridharadas: Yeah that's at the heart of my book and I think part of what the book is about, at its core, is the notion that being good at business is an automatic qualifier for solving any societal problem. In other words, I mean, I know some people who are very, very good academic sociologists, and I will tell you something you never hear good academic sociologists say, which is, I should be in charge of running that restaurant chain because I'm really good at academic sociology. Or you never hear really talented pilots saying, you know what, I think I should run Chicago Public Schools because I land planes expertly and I've done many of them. But when business people succeed at any kind of business, many of them are filled with the thought that what they need to do urgently is get into some other domain, in which they have no knowledge and actually claim that they have all knowledge--and that the businessman skills are just what it takes to save it. I often joke that you never want to get in a car with a philanthro-capitalist because they're going to swerve across six lanes. They don't know how to stay in their lane.

David Feldman: Do you mind giving an example of choices that Bill Gates is making through American public schools and for Africa where the Africans and the American citizens have no consent?

Anand Giridharadas: I don't know that level of detail, but I think one thing that raised concerns to me was.

David Feldman: Like pushing the Common Core, for example, in America.

Anand Giridharadas: Right. One of the things with Common Core is--from what I've read, and this is not an area that I did reporting on, so just based on what I've read--they got it through a lot of states without a vote, a substantive vote or even a vote at all on the floor of those state legislatures. And so then you got kids being educated in a new way that was essentially incubated privately by a philanthropy. And whether or not Common Core was a superior education to what was before, you can understand that if you are a parent, particularly a right-wing parent, the idea that someone you may perceive as a left-wing coastal billionaire, came up with a plan for your kid's education in private--got it through your state legislature without a substantive debate or any debate at all--is exactly the kind of thing that makes you feel the world is rigged. And so if you understand that that is a danger in our culture right now, you don't want to do things that are going to lend any truth to that because the reality is, people are imagining that even when it's not true. So lending any fuel to the flames of this feeling that rich and powerful people are ruling us in secret is very dangerous as a matter of the kind of democratic legitimacy.

David Feldman: Ralph, do we know do we know of how the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation makes deals with pharmaceutical companies and agricultural companies to dictate what kind of vaccines, what kind of medicine, what kind of fertilizer and seed has to be used in Africa?

Ralph Nader: No, I don't know anything about that. I do know the Bill Gates has said that he's a big investor in biotech, which of course deals with genetically modified organisms in terms of seeds. But I don't know anything more in detail. Listen, well, we're out of time. We've been talking with Anand

Giridharadas, the Author of the celebrated book, WINNERS TAKE ALL: The Elite Charade of Changing the World. And, Anand, I hope we can continue this because I want to see that roundtable come to fruition. It's been proposed again and again, but nobody has gone from home plate to home plate on this. And we can definitely make the kind of structural changes from a principle that I learned throughout American history—that justice not only needs justice seekers, including those who are the aggrieved seeking justice—it needs money. The Women's Suffrage Movement, the Abolition of Slavery Movement drew on philanthropists in Boston and New York. The Modern Environmental Movement drew on two families in New Orleans and Virginia in the 1960s. And so we should take it to the next step and make sure that your book and my book lead to a realization of change that is not charity but justice—changing the country in ways that cannot be subjected to anybody pulling the plug because they don't like the way something is developing in the object of their charity.

Anand Giridharadas: I like that. I think we should call it the American Dream Fund.

Ralph Nader: That's fine. By the way, I wrote a book, you know, on Left-Right Alliance to dismantle the corporate state, Unstoppable, so I'm very much resonating off your point that we should have conservatives as well as progressives. But the whole idea is to get pre-endorsement of proposals so that the funders don't get mixed up all the way down the line with what Senator we should criticize or praise or tactics and strategies. But \$5 billion to change things that would amount to trillions of dollars in a more productive, healthy and safer life, and a more just rule of law, is what's called peanuts, in the modern philanthropy movement. Thank you, Anand.

Anand Giridharadas: Thank you so much.

Steve Skrovan: We've been speaking with Anand Giridharadas, Author of WINNERS TAKE ALL: The Elite Charade of Changing the World. We will link to that at ralphnaderradiohour.com. Now, we're going to take a short break and check in with the man who is a thorn in the side of the corporate elite, our Corporate Crime Reporter, Russell Mokhiber. When we come back, we're going to do your listener questions, you are listening to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour, back in a minute.

Russell Mokhiber: From National Press Building in Washington DC, this is your Corporate Crime Reporter "Morning Minute" for Friday, November 2, 2018, I'm Russell Mokhiber. The FBI is conducting a criminal investigation into whether Tesla misstated production figures about the electric car maker's, Model-3 Sedan and misled investors about its business. That's according to a report in The Wall Street Journal. The Journal reported that FBI agents are contacting former Tesla employees to interview them. The paper cited anonymous people familiar with the matter. A Tesla spokesperson said the company cooperated with a "voluntary request" for documents from the Justice Department earlier this year but has no additional requests for months.

"We have not received the subpoena, a request for testimony or any other formal process and there have been no additional document requests about this from the Justice Department for months", Tesla said in a statement. Earlier this year, Tesla CEO, Elon Musk, pledged to step up production of the Model 3 to 5,000 vehicles per week by the end of the second quarter. For the Corporate Crime Reporter, I'm Russell Mokhiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you, Russell. Our first question is actually not so much question, it's an update from a young independent reporter named Alex Nunez, who's working in the Rhode Island/ Connecticut

area. And he has been reporting how the Defense Contractor, General Dynamics, is getting a huge subsidy from the State of Connecticut to build a facility there and in a past show Ralph suggested that he file a Freedom of Information (FOIA) request to find out the details of the deal. And that was many months ago. And this is his latest update. He says, "Hi Steve, writing to give you an update on my Freedom of Information request in Connecticut and Rhode Island regarding the two General Dynamics subsidy deals. Both states are still saying they're in active negotiations with the company, and therefore cannot release any contract info on the subsidy packages." He says, "I'm curious what Ralph thinks of this. My memory is the deals were announced in late April/early May. Seems by now we should be able to see what our elected officials are putting our tax dollars behind and what stipulations or lack thereof they are agreeing to."

Ralph Nader: I think the reason is the elections. In Connecticut, they're just putting the deal on hold to see whether Ned Lamont, who's in the lead, will win the race for the governorship. He's a Democrat. And so it's just Governor Malloy passing it on to what he thinks will be his successor, Governor Lamont, elect.

Steve Skrovan: All right. Well, thank you for that update, Alex. Keep at it, I think you'd probably be saying to him, right, Ralph?

Ralph Nader: Yes, yes.

David Feldman: This one comes from Andrew World. Dear Ralph, I appreciate your show, however at times I find it frustrating to listen to it. Instead of using unifying language around the generations, you feel the need to crap on them. The young generation are doing great work and activism but you seem more interested in complaining about screen time as opposed to talking about what the new generation of activists are doing. Your analysis should not be about generational divides, like those in corporate media, but instead focus on class divides. Every time you complain about the youth, you lose the chance of passing your wisdom down by alienating them. By focusing on class, you will not alienate those potential younger listeners.

Ralph Nader: Since the 1960s, I've worked with thousands of young people, college students, people in the neighborhoods to achieve greater justice. And when I see the vast majority young people not emulating a small minority of young people in getting ready to take the responsibility for our country in the world in the coming decades, I have to challenge them. I don't want to flatter them. I don't want to engage in empty exhortation, because that doesn't recognize the reality of all too many young people who don't have a high enough estimate of their own significance as active citizens and have dropped out. A majority of young people don't even vote, much less get engaged in their community, state, region, nation or world. And so I'm all about challenging them. And I don't believe in this generation gap, but I do believe in the older generation trying to provide some perspective and wisdom to a younger generation about what happens to societies when they are not civically active. All you have to do is look at the concentration of greater and greater power in the corporate and government status in our country called the corporate state. But even easier, look at other countries where young generations were otherwise preoccupied and what kind of dictatorial result was a consequence. Just look at the recent election in Brazil, and who is going to take control of Brazil, politically in Brasilia, come January-- someone who wants a military dictatorship, someone who is a racist, someone who wants to corporatize the Amazon and destroy the lungs of the Earth.

David Feldman: In 1972, 18-year-olds finally got the right to vote. Did you support that?

Ralph Nader: All the way as I support 16-year-olds. I think if you're old enough to work, you should be old enough to vote. And I might add that the 16-year-olds would be even more excited about using that vote and turning out than the 18-year-olds; just the way the 18-year-olds are more excited than the 20-year-olds. There's interesting age aspect to all of this.

David Feldman: Okay, that's interesting because you usually hear the young people don't vote, especially in things like we're going through now, the Mid-term Elections, it's really the old people who come up.

Ralph Nader: That's true, traditionally more than two-thirds of people 18 to 34 do not vote. And that's the highest age classification non-vote situation in our country. The older you are the more likely you are to vote, unfortunately.

David Feldman: There's a piece in The Economist this week about the success of Australia, how it hasn't had a recession since 1991. They're doing all things right and they factor in mandatory voting in Australia. One of the reasons Australia is doing so much better than so many First-World countries is because of mandatory voting.

Ralph Nader: Well, I think it would be better for us as well as long as people had the opportunity to vote for "None of the Above" on the ballot or to write in their own vote because they don't like who's on the ballot--all the candidates, they don't like. And it gives people the right to go to the polls and vote no, where now you can only vote yes or stay home and grumble. However, Brazil has universal voting. That didn't turn out very well in the election a few days ago, did it?

David Feldman: I didn't know that. How do they enforce something like that? You get fined.

Ralph Nader: It's not enforceable really, but they have a much higher vote turnout. They probably have a voting turnout in the mid-to-high 70% range compared to our 55 to 65%.

Steve Skrovan: Okay, Ralph, we have two questions about healthcare, one from listener Beverly Alexander and one from Debora Kennedy. Beverly Alexander says, "Ralph, Slavery continues at the highest levels. Members of Congress are enslaved to corporations. We will never have Democracy while the system continues. How can all the great ideas you discuss ever become law when Congress feels free to ignore the public?" "They have to follow their corporate masters." And it says, "What do we do, as you said, the Democratic Party leadership feels impelled to ignore the 85% of Democrats who want Medicare for All." What will it take?" And Deborah Kennedy says, "Why is it that no one will touch the issue of getting rid of insurance in our healthcare system?" "With insurance taking 40% of our premiums, 20% profit under ACA plus at least 20% to coders, you would think someone would mention it." "Why does everyone think we have to keep insurance?" "Do all the countries use insurance?" "Which insurance companies will we use under the new system?" "How will we rein them in?" "Can we get rid of pre-existing conditions?"

Ralph Nader: Well, to both of you, the answer is Full Medicare for All called Single-Payer where the government ensures and there's private delivery of healthcare, except in poor areas where you have public clinics. I mean that's what Canada does. Why don't we learn from Canada? Look at the comparisons. In Canada, they spend half as much per capita, about \$4500 on insurance--the provinces

with help from the national government, and they cover everybody, everybody. And everybody has free choice of doctor and hospital. There are no narrow networks. And you don't have these detailed computer bills and the confusion and no one in Canada thinks about changing or not changing jobs because of health insurance or whether they'll get covered at one job site or not at another--not to mention other anxieties that don't operate in Canada and operate in this country based on tens of millions of people being uninsured or underinsured. And that would replace what Debora Kennedy called insurance. She's talking about private insurance companies; it would replace them. And when Medicare was enacted in the mid-60s in the United States, it replaced, for the most part, private health insurers of elderly people. The gaps were taken by private health insurance called today Medigap Insurance, but they have so undermined Medicare--the private corporate interests in this country--that it's becoming more complicated; undermined by this corporate Medicare Advantage, which sounds good to the elderly people in the seminars where they come for free lunch and the sales pitch is made by companies like United Healthcare or whatnot, but it actually curtails their services compared to Medicare, in addition to all kinds of other fine-print shenanigans. So the answer is you organize in every Congressional district. You bring home the Senators and Representatives, and you have them tell you, if they are for single-payer. And it's already been drafted. It's called HR 676, and in the House of Representatives, and already over 122 members of the House--all of them Democrats--have signed on, and that's the purest form of single-payer and that's what we should get behind.

Steve Skrovan: Ralph, with the elections coming up, I have two questions for you. One is since you have experience running for office and you've been through this—with the election less than a week away, if you were a Democrat, what would you be emphasizing in these final days before the election?

Ralph Nader: I'd be emphasizing living wage. I'd make the gutted federal minimum wage of \$7.25, an atrocity and I would push for \$15 per hour and reach 30 million workers who are making less today than workers made in 1968 adjusted for inflation. That's the voters that often stay home; they feel disempowered. You give them something to do legitimately, which is go vote for a raise. It's long overdue. It has been denied you for too many years. Go vote for a raise. America needs a raise.

Steve Skrovan: So do you see any Democrats doing that? I see them emphasizing healthcare and pre-existing conditions. Do you see Democrats emphasizing minimum wage?

Ralph Nader: Very little. A few of the insurgent progressives are pushing a "Fight for \$15"--that movement--but most are just a throwaway line like we need a higher minimum wage--no authenticity, no dollar figure. And just before the election, Steve, I would campaign at midnight to 3:00 a.m. for all those many millions of workers who work the midnight shift that keep this society going for the rest of us. I would at 12:00 midnight campaign in front of the labor shift before a major hospital and then go visit an all-night pharmacy, an all-night factory, an all-night nursing home and make a big point that these people are often shut out of every meeting with candidates, and you are going to respect and recognize them in this final run up to the election.

Steve Skrovan: Well, very good. Very good. Now let's go to the other side if you were a Republican candidate... now we know what Donald Trump is emphasizing days before the election--immigration and fear mongering. What would you tell a Republican to emphasize in the days before their election?

Ralph Nader: The Republicans need to get the moderate Republicans who are turned off of Donald Trump especially in the last few weeks. And what they should do is politely distance themselves from being Trump acolytes and basically stake out a moderate Republican platform.

Steve Skrovan: So you think that the moderates will go for that?

Ralph Nader: Yeah, the margin is very slim for the Republicans in a lot of these Congressional races and if the moderate Republicans stay home or say this time I'm going to vote for the Democrats, they're gonna lose even more seats.

Steve Skrovan: But do you think Trump's own instincts are saying, we got a stoke fear; that at least seems to be energizing the base.

Ralph Nader: That is but the base isn't expanding and he's at 41% in the polls. And so if he succeeds in telling the Republican candidates pretend I am on your ballot and tell your voters to vote for me as well as you, that's not enough to win. There's a lot of anxiety dread and fear out there and if the Democrats come forward with good universal healthcare, good living wage and income security, good support for public services where people live, work and raise their families, they can then link it to the party that is going to address your legitimate anxieties, dreads and fear, because that's what's underneath, so many of the minds of these voters at this time.

Steve Skrovan: Well, there you have it. Our next program will be the day after the election. So we'll find out what they all did and how it all shook out. Thanks, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you, Steve.

Steve Skrovan: Well, thank you for your questions. Keep them coming on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour website. I also want to thank our guest today, Anand Giridharadas. For those of you listening on the radio, that's our show. For you podcast listeners, stay tuned for some bonus material, we call the "wrap-up". A transcript of this show will appear on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour website, soon after we post online.

David Feldman: For Ralph's weekly column, it's free, go to nader.org and you can get it sent automatically to your inbox. For more from Russell Mokhiber, go to corporatecrimereporter.com.

Steve Skrovan: Ralph has got two new books out, the fable, HOW THE RATS RE-FORMED THE CONGRESS (to acquire a copy of that go to ratsreformedcongress.org) and TO THE RAMPARTS: How Bush and Obama paved the way for the Trump presidency and why it isn't too late to reverse course. We will link to that also.

David Feldman: The producers of the Ralph Nader Radio Hour are Jimmy Lee Wirt and Matthew Marran, our executive producer is Alan Minsky.

Steve Skrovan: Our theme music, "Stand Up, Rise Up" was written and performed by Kemp Harris; our proofreader is Elisabeth Solomon.

David Feldman: Join us next week on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour for our post Mid-term Election show with Law Professor, Activist and Author, Joel Rogers. Thank you, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you, David. Thanks, Steve. Thank you, Jimmy, and this is the last radio program before our November elections, listeners, get the vote out, marshal your neighbors, friends, coworkers, voting is a duty that is self imposed on us and we ought to achieve it in that manner.