

Make Me Smart September 3, 2021 transcript

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Kai Ryssdal: Drew, I'm gonna need you to tell me if the leaf blower gets too loud. Oh, or you could just start the podcast.

Molly Wood: You know, which means it's working fine. It's working fine. Hello everyone. I'm Molly Wood/ Welcome back to Make Me Smart where we make today make sense except on Fridays where we get increasingly nonsensical because drinks.

Kai Ryssdal: I'll tell you what, we should at some point after you and I are both long gone, this podcast ought to air the previous 10 minutes of ramblings from you and me because that would be, that would just be really good. That would be really good.

Molly Wood: We have a new show where we both simultaneously angrily mutter things that we're gonna mumble. It's gonna be--anyways, it's gonna be a smash.

Kai Ryssdal: Yeah, I'm Kai Rysddal, it is a happy hour Friday and I can feel myself relaxing already now that we've started. Economics on tap is what we do on days like this, live stream is up and running. We got YouTube, we got discord, we got people are gonna listen to podcasts later, we got all kinds of stuff, all kinds of stuff.

Molly Wood: It is half full half empty day. It's gonna be amazing. I'm just checking the YouTube, I forgot my extra laptop so I'm not on discord today. Apologies. Larry Garfield suggests make me murder mumble which is just what the week has done actually. So that's fair. Ice cold cheer wine. We got cheer wine. What is cheer wine?

Kai Ryssdal: Cheer wine is a thing they do like in North Carolina and the South. I did a reporting trip with David Guta of Marketplace and now of NPR, who introduced me to cheer wine. It's vile, it's ridiculous, but it was, you know.

Molly Wood: Death's door gin and fever tree tonic. I thought somebody's having good earth tea. I love that. I love good earth tea. Smog City Brewing Company, Moscow Mule plus popcorn to absorb the vodka. I think wins Friday so far. That's outstanding. That's a really good mixer. Loving it. Loving it. Straight up bourbon. Just bourbon.

Kai Ryssdal: Straight up, even rocks.

Molly Wood: 3:30 in the afternoon, straight up bourbon. When honestly I'm counting the minutes.

Kai Ryssdal: Are you gonna go exercise when you're done?

Molly Wood: No, I did before this time. That's why my hair's wet for those on the video cuz I did the bike and then I did a little shower. Yeah, yeah. No, after. No. No exercise, only cry.

Kai Ryssdal: Fair enough. So I'm having stone liquid palm. It's a double IPA. 9.4% ABV, which I wasn't really counting on, but that's fine. Mostly. It's all good. It's all good.

Molly Wood: Dang. And the dogs know., thank you for noticing YouTube, the dogs are off with their guy. Yeah, they're off with the dog walker. They're gonna have a sleep over cuz I have a lot of work to do turns out.

Kai Ryssdal: Well, yes, you've got that thing you have to do we're not allowed to talk about.

Molly Wood: It's so much, it's a lot. Great. It's very exciting. So true, truer words were never spoken. Let's get to the news.

Kai Ryssdal: Let's climb in here, shall we? Alright. I'll start. I saw a tweet today from Emily Stewart, who writes for Vox. We've had her on Marketplace once or twice. And she tweeted this morning, or maybe it was this afternoon. She said the corporate response to Texas is that there isn't one. And I retweeted it. And I said Good point. And then later in the day, some things started coming out of the woodwork. Molly, you found one. I also found one from Dara Khosrowshahi, who is the CEO of Uber, who, much like Lyft, has decided they are going to pay legal fees for drivers who get caught in the dragnet of SB8 down in Texas, the abortion law. So there is a response. It's been, I think, fair to say slow in coming. But it's interesting to see that it's happening.

Molly Wood: It has actually been incredibly muted, I think would be the safe, I mean, it's been mostly silent. And in fact, I think the only reason Uber, Uber and Lyft got involved is because their drivers--this is in case you have not been keeping up on this, and if that is the case, I envy you desperately because, wow--this is the anti-abortion law passed. I'm just going to call it the forced birth law passed in Texas that for all intents and purposes outlaws abortion there and deputizes anyone in the state or any state for that matter to snitch on and sue someone who they believe to have been involved in an abortion, a woman who got one, someone who advised them, and potentially a Lyft or Uber driver who drove a woman to an abortion clinic. That is like, the scope of this thing. It's crazy. Or intended to, or maybe talked about it in the car. Who knows. The other example actually of a business responding to this that I found today was that an anti-abortion group set up a website to collect tips. I mean, I want to just keep reinforcing how dystopian this is, by the way, to literally collect rat outs set up by the state's largest anti-abortion group saying, prolifewhistleblower.com, saying please, send us your tips about women who are trying to exercise their right to choose a constitutionally protected right in every

other state except for Texas. And happily, Tik Tokers got a hold of it and flooded it with crap, which is delightful. And then finally, after a whole bunch of pressure their host Go Daddy said that they had given this website 24 hours to find a new hosting provider before they would cut our service because they said it prohibited their, it violated the terms of service that prohibit customers from collecting or harvesting nonpublic information about anyone without their written consent, which I would say, actually, to me feels like an outstanding way around this whole thing.

Kai Ryssdal: Yeah. Yeah, really clever. I've two thoughts about this whole thing. Number one, you remember how fast the corporate response to the North Carolina bathroom bill was? It was really fast. I mean, the NBA pulled out and companies were like, I don't know. And it's been really muted here. And I can't understand why. So that's, that's the, that's the professional observation. The personal observation is that I think I've said more than once on this podcast, most recently, with Texas democrats walking out of the legislature to deny quorum over the voting rights bills down there. I, you were rightly outraged, and I was, I was in the wrong when I said this. I said, look, if you want norms to be upheld, you have to uphold the norms. And that's been my thing all through the Trump era, right, for whatever craziness the Trump administration did, whatever the republicans did that was so on the face of it in bad faith, I said, look, if you want to hold up the norms, uphold the norms, you got up, you got to uphold the norms. And I think I've changed my mind after this Texas law because it's just in such egregious bad faith, so cowardly and manipulative, and, and destructive to this democracy that I, I just don't know what else to do other than to say tit for tat, which, which just makes me so ineffably sad, you know, it's just really, really, it saddens me so much.

Molly Wood: I was saying on Twitter, you know, how I'm obsessed with framing. And I think that one of the things that has happened, and frankly, one of the reasons that the media response to this has been really muted, is because the media has accepted the framing that this is like really political, and that it's murder, you know, and that there's this kind of really sensitive, there's this extreme sensitivity attached to it, partly because it's based in religion. And so it's like, oh, well, this is a religious belief, and that's a hard thing to trample on. There's a presumed assumption of, of good faith, potentially. But what we're really seeing, I think, increasingly is a strain of true radicalism. And so I was saying on Twitter, like maybe we need to call this radical republicanism, like we call it far. Right. And that's one thing, right, but what we're really seeing is a splinter of a party that is willing to advocate for violence, engage in violence, take away rights, and where there isn't, you know, if you're looking for some sort of like internal logic, right, internal consistency between a party that's like, no, we'll let a 16 year old girl die because we're prohibiting masks at school. But we'll stop all women from having any abortions ever and force them to give birth against their will. There is not, right, there is none. So to engage on a logical playing field, to engage as though norms are in effect with who, with, with what are essentially, extremists is a losing battle. And we've never really known exactly how to deal with extremists, as members of the media and the public and politicians and, I think we're seeing those impacts now.

Kai Ryssdal: Yeah, no, look, I totally agree. And it's kind of crazy that five years after Donald Trump came down that escalator, because that was the precipitating event, right I mean, let's, let's not, let's not pretend it was anything other than that. It's crazy that we're still having this conversation about the media. And I'm, me with my, if you want the norms upheld, you gotta uphold the norms thing, I'm as much the same as anybody, but I just, I can't anymore. I just, it's so, it's, it's, it's a, it's a foundational issue. And you can't play both sides of that street.

Molly Wood: I saw a Bloomberg reporter tweeting about this literally yesterday, calling certain members of Congress pro-life and I was like, and you're doing it. Right? And you're doing it right. That's what language matters. You betcha. That's exactly right. Yeah. Speaking of members of Congress, as, as everyone knows, I've been thinking a lot about climate change. Oh, wait, no, you have another thing that's gonna make me even more mad. I'm just gonna sit here and drink more bourbon.

Kai Ryssdal: This is the one that's really gonna piss you off. So in my, in, in my other life on, on broadcast, I host a program on business and the economy as opposed to, you know, the thing that we do here on Friday afternoons. And I want to remind everybody that the 235,000 jobs were added to the American economy in August, which is great. I would also like to point out, though, that only 11.9% of those jobs went to women. So of the 235,000 new jobs, men got 207,000 of them, women got 28,000 of them. And the net deficit from women in this pandemic is 3 million jobs. Which is just stunning. Stunning.

Molly Wood: And by the way, the only demographic group in America to see job losses in this report were Black women.

Kai Ryssdal: Oh, yeah. And the Black unemployment rate overall went up 6/10 percent to 8.8. It's, it's, yeah, there's so many structural things wrong.

Molly Wood: But, you know, I was having a conversation this morning was someone who was saying, like, I don't, I still, like we have to figure out why these jobs are not being felt, filled, because you know, if you drive through any town in America, you'll see signs that are like, due to the labor shortage, our restaurant service is terrible, or like we can't, help wanted, I beg you, right? Like, in car windows, like, please somebody come work for me. And people aren't. And so, you know, there have been lots of reasons posited. And I really, really just have to think that childcare must be at the root of it. If these are the numbers for women.

Kai Ryssdal: It has to be childcare, right?

Molly Wood: Like, it has to be. I mean, yes, there's fear of getting Delta. There are layers here, of course. But I am sort of starting to think that at the end of the day, it almost has to be childcare. And it's just, it's. it is beyond infuriating. It is beyond infuriating. And you know, who is out protesting today, by the way, for their own rights? Women in Kabul.

Kai Ryssdal: Oh, yeah, saw that. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Crazy. Right.

Molly Wood: Afghan women who will potentially be tortured and killed for this are out here protesting for the roads. And I'm not gonna lie, I had this moment where I was like, what if we all just stopped? What if women just stopped? And we're like, you're on your own. Yeah. I mean, should we just skip to the game? Nothing I say is gonna make anyone happy.

Kai Ryssdal: If you want to, it's up to you. It's up to you.

Molly Wood: God, I was just thinking about infrastructure. I'm going to keep this quick because there's been obviously a lot of talk about infrastructure. We saw, once again, this week with Hurricane Ida, that America's infrastructure is nowhere near ready for climate change. We are nowhere near ready for extreme weather events that are exacerbated by our changed climate, as evidenced by a million people still without power in Louisiana, all of New York subway lines shut down from flooding, all of them, roads collapsing. The whole system again, it's like the third time this year or something. It's like, we are not even close to ready. And we're still having this big argument. And Joe Manchin is still out here in the Wall Street Journal in a fit of terrible timing, as I believe someone put it on TV, arguing that we should just like put a pause on this, the guy who takes a ton of money, by the way, he said that, that trying to transition off fossil fuels would make climate change worse. Is from, you know, a big oil and coal producing state, has had a big fundraiser recently thrown by the oil industry is arguing that we shouldn't spend so much on infrastructure. Even though, as we can see, we are nowhere near ready for the effects of climate change on our infrastructure. And but nevertheless, even what we're talking about spending is \$46 billion on climate resilience. \$46 billion, that is a super lot of money for like, you and me. That is nothing, the levee system in New Orleans alone cost \$14 billion. And their whole entire electrical grid went down, the whole thing for the whole state. \$46 billion is what we want to spend on resilience. And people are out here being like, oh, I don't know. I just, I don't know. I don't know. I don't know.

Kai Ryssdal: Drew. Drew.

Molly Wood: Help!

Kai Ryssdal: Come through. Thank you.

Molly Wood: I was just sitting there, sitting there thinking about it like oh, by the way, I want you to know that me and the YouTube are very impressed with your willingness to acknowledge that you were maybe not right on a topic. Great job, buddy. However, like I still appreciate the norms thing.

Kai Ryssdal: Yeah. It's really, it's, it's not about the being wrong. It's about what it means.

Molly Wood: I don't think you were wrong, wrong. Like you're not wrong. We should be able to uphold norms, we totally should be able to. But anyway, I just want you to know you're getting

really nice shout outs. We can't have nice things. Except you can have nice shout outs in the YouTube. Okay.

Kai Ryssdal: Sorry, SJ LaRue on the YouTube comment says, sorry, I thought this was Thursday for a moment. Alright, anyway, Drew?

Molly Wood: Please know that our internal criticism includes “we can get a little depressing.” We're working on that. Drew, help us. Let's play half full half empty. Let's go.

Drew Jostad: Are you half full or half empty on zoom allowing for charitable donations on the platform?

Kai Ryssdal: I hadn't heard about that.

Molly Wood: I didn't either. Hold please, for a quick duck duck.

Drew Jostad: Zoom adds a donation option to its list of features.

Kai Ryssdal: So look, I was like, this is a little bit like—was it really? No. Seriously?

Molly Wood: This is so smart, though, because you could hold a fundraiser over Zoom. Like you could have a school auction over zoom and people could donate directly. That's great. I love it. Genius.

Kai Ryssdal: Okay. Sure. I'll go with that.

Molly Wood: Hey, on the plus side, though, when I put it into DuckDuckGo, the first result that came up was Marketplace. It was on the morning report. So congratulations, SEO team. You're getting her done, I'm half full on that. I'm half full on this. I think that's a great idea. So smart.

Kai Ryssdal: There you go. Alright. Next.

Molly Wood: Easy. Easy one.

Drew Jostad: Starbucks unionization.

Kai Ryssdal: Oh, interesting.

Molly Wood: Starbucks isn't unionized?

Kai Ryssdal: Starbucks is not union. And there are three stores in I want to say upstate New York where they have launched a unionization drive. I think so much has been made the past, I don't know, 10, 12, 15 years of the benefits that you get at Starbucks and how they'll, you know, do your health care if you're only x hours a week and they'll pay for college and all this jazz. But,

but there are some scheduling issues. I think with Starbucks and those things. Look, you got to, you got to take care of your people and if unionization is what it takes, then okay. I didn't know.

Molly Wood: Yeah, definitely. I mean, I think we're all seeing that the degradation of worker rights that led to the wage stagnation of the last 40 years and frankly, is probably contributing to people not wanting to go back to jobs that have been historically kind of crappy for a really long time. Unions may have their issues, but this is the type of thing that they're really, that they're really good for. Did you know that in 2020, only 10% of wage and salary workers belong to unions? More than 20% in 1983, which is still kind of a small amount, but so yeah, you know what? I'm half full. Get it, Starbucks. Get your rights, workers.

Kai Ryssdal: Boom, go.

Drew Jostad: Half full or half empty on IKEA getting into resales?

Molly Wood: Love this.

Kai Ryssdal: So which are you? Which are you?

Kai Ryssdal: Oh, no, I'm waiting. That was, that was, that was a, that was a non-editorial sigh. I think we need to differentiate between my sighs. The editorial kinds and the non-editorial.

Molly Wood: I am super full on this. I'm all the way half full on this. I think this is so, it's such a good sustainability move. There's this movement in the sustainability world called circularity, the idea that your business actually needs to include consideration of the end of life of your product, like what happens, that's a, that's a customer service issue. What do I do with this worn out thing? And so Starbucks, I'm sorry, IKEA is making this real circularity move. Like when you're done with your thing, instead of tossing it in the trash, bring it back, consign it, we'll sell it for you, like it's a really good environmental move.

Kai Ryssdal: Yeah, I'm full. We did a special god, it's got to be like 10 or 12 years ago now, on Marketplace, one part of which was the overwhelming amount of crap in this economy that winds up in landfills something like 18 months afterwards, I mean, it's, it's like stunning. So whatever we can do to reduce that, provided, let me just say, provided I don't have to reassemble those IKEA things, right. I mean, they're sold as is, you don't have to like, take them apart.

Molly Wood: That's like, oh my god. Yeah, because I never even thought of that. That's freaking genius. Oh, I am only buying used IKEA furniture forever now cause they're already put together.

Kai Ryssdal: Think how many blisters you've gotten from those frickin Allen wrenches, right. Come on.

Molly Wood: So many. So many. Oh, that's absolutely genius. Yeah, really. A couple years ago, I went on this kick where I was like, I'm not buying anything new ever again because there's so much stuff in the world. Like, why should I? And it's also much cheaper. Now I'm like, I'm not buying anything because my neighbors put out really good free stuff.

Kai Ryssdal: Oh, I know. I know, that, I mean, we should do that story. Marketplace should do that story.

Molly Wood: The pandemic has been a frickin jackpot for free stuff. Yeah, that's a good story. I'm half full on that story also.

Kai Ryssdal: Yeah, yep. Totally.

Molly Wood: We just got my kid a new desk. It's amazing. Okay, go.

Drew Jostad: Okay, what are your thoughts on this week's misinformation crack down on Reddit.

Kai Ryssdal: I'm unfamiliar.

Molly Wood: I thought it wasn't an actual misinformation crackdown. I thought it was Reddit users being like, we're gonna crack down on misinformation ourselves, which I kind of love, actually. The community policing itself. They were like, flooding the ivermectin site with true facts.

Kai Ryssdal: Oh, wow. I'm all the way full on that.

Molly Wood: Hold on. Oh, duck, duck, duck.

Drew Jostad: I mean, Reddit has banned anti-vaccine subreddit and quarantine 54. Other subreddits.

Molly Wood: Oh, there we go. Hmm. Yeah, Reddit has really, I mean, this is, Reddit's really struggled with this one. I think, you know, most of the social media sites have landed on a similar point of view, which is like, if it's gonna get people killed, probably not. It's bad. Yeah, it's bad. I like the idea, though. And I really mean, you know, how I feel about this, like, it's a slippery slope. Because the thing about algorithms, about Reddit is that, unlike Facebook, it just exists on the site and you have to go find it. They're not necessarily promoting it to you, although they might be. So I think the real question is, like, should it be allowed to exist or should it just not be amplified? I like this quarantined idea. Maybe.

Kai Ryssdal: Ring fence, as it were.

Molly Wood: Yes. Ring fence it. Yeah, I'm--

Kai Ryssdal: Contrary to Nancy Cassatt, our boss, who said, I want a decision from all of you on the half full half empty things. I'm going to say whatever. I'm gonna, I'm gonna go with Molly.

Molly Wood: I am half full on what seems like a good measure and on the community policing itself. Because honestly, you get what you allow as a community. And that goes for everything. Get what you vote for, get what you don't vote for. You get what you tolerate.

Kai Ryssdal: There you go. I think that's right.

Molly Wood: This is a little bit of a dodge, but I'm sticking with it.

Kai Ryssdal: I'm fine with that. Last one. Do we have a last one or was that the last one?

Drew Jostad: Okay. The perseverance rover has collected its first rock sample. Thoughts on perseverance.

Kai Ryssdal: Well, more importantly, it's the first rock sample that's going to be brought back, right, that's the deal. So they drill a hole in a rock. They pulled it out. And then through some, you know, orbital mechanics, whatever, they're gonna get it back to Earth, which is just cray cray. Half full all the way. Send Matt Damon. Um, yes. Yes. Yes. Wow. I'm not ducking.

Molly Wood: I know, Kai's like, yes, that's what I said! That's amazing. That is actually amazing. It is a yeah, apparently there's some uncertainty about whether it actually kept the rock, like the first time it crumbled, which is kind of interesting. And the second one looks promising. And they're gonna try to get it back to earth.

Kai Ryssdal: Oh, inconclusive. Poor sunlight, blah, blah, blah. Yeah, so yes, totally full. And I hope we can get it back cause come on, a rock from Mars?

Molly Wood: So cool. Half full. Thank you for the space porn, I love it.

Kai Ryssdal: Yeah. Totally. All right. We ended on an up note. That's awesome. That is all.

Molly Wood: I know. Make me smile! We're sampling Mars.

Kai Ryssdal: Yes. Good stuff. I don't even know what that was. Drew went crazy. Drew's just hitting buttons.

Molly Wood: Drew's like, just leave. Alright, that is it for us today. It has been a while since we asked this, but if you're not a subscriber to this podcast in your favorite pod listening app, you should be because you just get a new one for free every day. So hit the subscribe button because apparently it helps us in the metrics department. And we just love to know that you're out there. It makes us feel good.

Kai Ryssdal: And, and our, you know, performance evaluations, frankly, depend on it. So no pressure but, you know, hit that little follow button, I'm just saying.

Molly Wood: Doing a very good job.

Kai Ryssdal: That's a, that's a whole different podcast. Kai and Molly's performance evaluations. Anyway, tell us what you think about what we do, good bad or otherwise, questions, comments, what have you. Send us a voice memo or an email to makemesmart@marketplace.org, or you can just pick up the phone and call us: 508-827-6278, 508-UB-SMART. Hook us up.

Molly Wood: Performance review time. Keep it coming.

Kai Ryssdal: I have to do my goals. What are my goals? Come on.

Molly Wood: Oh, I know, I have to do my goals too. Stay sober on Friday podcast. Make Me Smart is produced by Marissa Cabrera. Today's episode, otherwise anything could happen. Today's episode was engineered by the masterful Drew Jostad. The team behind the YouTube live stream and our game half full half empty is Steven Byeon, Catherine Divine, Emily McCune, master troll Emily McCune, and Mel Rosenberg.

Kai Ryssdal: She's all about pumpkin spice. This will be dispatched with Marque Greene. I'm just saying. The theme music for half full half empty was written by none other than Drew Jostad. The senior producer is Bridget Bodnar. The executive director of on demand is Sitara Nieves. And with that. Oh, you know what we should have said? We should have said we're off Monday. Oh, well, too bad.

Molly Wood: They'll figure it out.