

The
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Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
Alphonse Fletcher University Professor
Director, Hutchins Center for African and
African American Research
Harvard University

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Webinar

Moderator: Glenn Hutchins
Chairman, North Island
Co-Founder, Silver Lake Partners

Introduction

Barbara Van Allen, President

Good morning and welcome to the 617th meeting of The Economic Club of New York in our 114th year. I'm Barbara Van Allen, President and CEO of the Club. As many of you know, The Economic Club of New York is the nation's leading nonpartisan forum for discussions on economic, social and political issues, and our mission is as important today as ever as we continue to bring people together as a catalyst for conversation and innovation.

This past fall, the Club launched its Focus on Racial Equity Series, where we've been leveraging our platform to bring together prominent thought leaders to help us explore and better understand the various dimensions of racial inequity and to highlight strategies, best practices and resources that the business community can use to be a force for change. We are not doing this work alone and would like to give special thanks to our corporate partners – BlackRock, Bloomberg, Mastercard, M&T Bank, Wilmington Trust, PayPal, S&P Global and Taconic Capital as well as the many members, speakers and subject matter experts that are now and will be engaged in this programming.

A special welcome to members of the ECNY 2021 Class of Fellows – a select group of very diverse, rising next-gen business thought leaders. Welcome also to the graduate

students joining us today from Fordham University and the Fashion Institute of Technology.

It's a pleasure for me to now introduce our special guest, Henry Louis Gates. Henry is the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University. He's an Emmy and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker, literary scholar, journalist, cultural critic, and institution builder. Henry has authored or co-authored more than 20 books. He's created more than 20 documentary films, including *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross*, *Black in Latin America*, *Black America since MLK: And Still I Rise*, and *Finding Your Roots*, his groundbreaking genealogy series now in its seventh season on PBS, one of my personal favorites.

The recipient of 58 honorary degrees, Henry was a member of the first class awarded "genius grants" by the MacArthur Foundation in 1981, and in 1998, he became the first African American scholar to be awarded the National Humanities Medal. A former chair of the Pulitzer Prize board, he's a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and serves on a wide array of boards, including the New York Public Library, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Aspen Institute, Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Library of America, and the Brookings Institution.

The format today will be a conversation, and we are very fortunate to have a former Vice Chair and Club member and Chair of North Island and Co-Founder of Silver Lake Partners, Glenn Hutchins, doing the interview. We will be using the chat box today so that function is there for you to use. Feel free to put questions in the box and Glenn will try to get to as many as he can. We will be ending promptly at 12:15. And as a reminder, this conversation is on the record and we do have a fair amount of media on the line. So without further ado, Glenn, I'm going to pass the mike to you, sir.

Conversation with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

GLENN HUTCHINS: Thank you, Barbara. Welcome Skip. Nice to have you with us.

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Thank you.

GLENN HUTCHINS: So just a little context for Barbara's very good introduction, the way I think about, framework, when you think about what Skip has done is he's had essentially three careers, any one of which would have been quite significant. First, he essentially created from whole cloth the field of African American literature, starting with his PhD dissertation. Next, he built the world's leading department in African American studies at Harvard, what I often introduce is as the Quattrocento for African American studies, culminating in the work that we did together at the great Hutchins Center at

Harvard. And third, he's become a public intellectual, taking the work of the Academy and making it accessible to people who aren't scholars in ways that create an understanding and build bridges around this very important issue of race in America.

He has two buckets of documentaries that are part of that effort. The first is, well, two buckets of kind of video work. The first is called, *Finding Your Roots*, which I recommend. I think, Skip will correct me, but I think it's the most watched show on PBS these days. Is that right, Skip? Number one.

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Number one, baby.

GLENN HUTCHINS: And for those who are *Downton Abbey* fans, I'm sorry, it's, I think at best, a distant second to *Finding Your Roots*, in which Skip combines historical research, genealogy and genetic science to give backgrounds to people who – for among many reasons, not the least of which was very few historical, almost no historical records were kept during the period of slavery and the slave trade. And he combines these three disciplines to create backgrounds for people to create understanding. And then secondly is a group of documentaries, which Barbara referred to on African American history.

And I think we're going to start today with a clip from the most recent of these, *The*

Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song. So why don't we go to that clip right now.

(Video Clip - Not Transcribed)

GLENN HUTCHINS: I feel like we should, are you going to lead us in song now, Skip?

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: I will spare you, my brother.

GLENN HUTCHINS: For those of you who are watching, Skip, pre-pandemic, would take me at least once every summer on our Fantasy Island, Martha's Vineyard, to see one of the great Black preachers who comes to the chapel here. Do we have one lined up for this summer, Skip?

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: I don't know. You know, the chapel is open in a modified form.

GLENN HUTCHINS: It's outdoors, yes.

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: But I'm not going. I'm going to watch it online, man. I'm afraid of this Delta variant.

GLENN HUTCHINS: Yes, I think you're right. I think that's a good point. So, Skip, of all the historical documentaries you had in the queue, why did you want to make *The Black Church*, and why did you want to make it now?

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Well, thanks, Glenn. Before I answer that, I just want everyone listening to know about your role in the history of African American studies. Glenn and his wife, Debbie, have been the generous benefactors and the creators of what is the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, and they have given the largest donation to the field of African and African American studies in history. So it's easy to build a great institution when you have a great friend and benefactor. You're like the wind at our back, and so I want to thank you for that and recognize that in front of your friends. In addition to that, we are very, very close friends. It makes it all the more fun.

The Black church is the oldest, most continuous and most important institution in the history of the African American people. It's the birthplace of Black music, Black poetry, Black sermons, and Black politics. It was a cultural laboratory where people would get together in a call and response way. They would be illiterate but hear verses from the King James Bible read to them. And they would then riff on these verses from the King James Bible and make poetry out of it.

Some of the greatest poetry in the history of the west when Antonin Dvorak came from the Czech Republic in 1893. He looked all over America and he said he only found one original contribution of the American people to world civilization, and that was the music of the spirituals, the music of our enslaved ancestors and that came right out of the bowels of the church.

And interestingly enough, Glenn, you know everyone is familiar with Karl Marx' statement that religion is the opiate of the people, but not for the Black church. For the Black church, politics was inextricably intertwined with its essence. So our predecessors developed a form of Christianity with a liberating God at its center, a God, who not only would liberate you after death, but liberate you after slavery first, and then after Jim Crow and after the final defeat of White supremacy and anti-Black racism.

In other words, because the church was built as a political protest, the first Black denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, when there were two leaders of the free Black community, Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, they were worshiping in St. George's Methodist Church and they decided they were going to sit in the front pews and some usher came to Absalom Jones and told him to get back with the Black people. So all the Black people got up and walked out and they formed their own church and their own denomination officially in 1816, the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

So from there through the civil rights movement, including Frederick Douglass, who was an ordained minister in the AME Church – he spoke regularly in the AME Church in New Bedford – and his arch rival, Henry Highland Garnet, who was a Presbyterian minister, all the way through the 20th century and Martin Luther King, the church has been the center of our politics. So it's an unusual Christian denomination in its relationship to political struggle.

And all we have to do is think of the 20th century, to Adam Clayton Powell, who was the congressman from New York, who was the face of the civil rights movement in the north until Martin Luther King emerged. So Adam Clayton Powell was a Baptist minister. Martin Luther King was a Baptist minister. He only left the south to go to BU to get a PhD in religion. And his father, as we know, and his grandfather were ministers. Andrew Young was a minister. Jesse Jackson was a minister. Al Sharpton was a minister. And most recently, the newest member of the Senate, Reverend Ralph Warnock, is a pastor at Martin Luther King's church. So religion and politics are bound together in our tradition.

And I wanted to make a series, because so many young people don't understand the glories of the Black church, its rich history, how our whole essence as a people developed out of the African American church. But our ancestors who came from Africa, Glenn, weren't only Christian and practiced traditional African religions. In fact, one of

the biggest surprises of the series is that no less than 20%, 20% of the Africans who got off the boats from Africa in the slave ships in North America were Muslims, practicing Muslims. Islam reached West Africa by the 10th century A.D. and by the 12th century A.D. we know that the practice of Islam was widespread in Senegal and Gambia.

Twenty-four percent of our ancestors came from Senegambia. So they were Muslims. They were Muslims when they got on the boat. They were Muslims when they got off the boat.

I had a really funny experience filming in a church in Savannah. It's called the First African Baptist Church in 1773. And there's this strange language carved into one of the pews. So we flew a linguist down from Harvard and we filmed it Live. We didn't tell him, you know, we didn't prep him. And he said, I said, well, professor, what language is this? He said, it's Arabic. And, Glenn, two stories below, down in the kitchen there was a Black lady, you know, a major figure of the church, and we could hear her screaming, it's not Arabic, it's cursive Hebrew, it's cursive Hebrew! But it was Arabic, no question about it.

And out of that blend of Islam and some Roman Catholics because the Kingdom of Congo converted to Roman Catholicism in 1491, the year before Columbus sailed across the ocean. This is like, go figure, right? The king even sent his son to Europe to be educated and he returned in 1516 as the first bishop in Sub-Saharan Africa. And

Congo sent about 25% of our enslaved ancestors too and maybe of them were baptized Roman Catholic so were Congolese-Roman Catholics. So you had a mixture of practicing Muslims, practicing Roman Catholics, and then the bulk of the Africans practiced traditional African ancestral worship. And out of that blend, of those three religious forces, came, that was the roux, the stew, the base out of which African American Christianity was born.

GLENN HUTCHINS: Skip, one of the, we'll come back to this in some depth at the end of this, but one of the reasons why The Economic Club of New York, is doing this series is to tell business leaders to think through how they can help address the issues that have been presented, that are represented by what you just talked about. As you know, the meals program that we set up with my family foundation during the pandemic used the African American churches in Harlem and the Bronx to distribute food, nutrition to this population. Is the Black church, is that an example of how the Black church is a vector that the business community can interact with in order to help address and foster change?

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Oh, without a doubt. If you want to reach the Black community, you have to start with the Black church. I mean sooner or later all roads lead to the Black church, even still. You know I saw one survey from Pew, Pew Research Center, it said 98% of the African American people believe in God. I mean

we're the most religious people on earth. And even if you don't go to church anymore, you came out of the church. And this is true for our secular forums as well as our sacred forums.

I don't know if you've seen Quest Love's Summer of Soul. And I commend everybody, you know, this was shot in Harlem in the late 60s and the film footage and language for 50 years in the basement, then they brought it out and they produced this fabulous, it's like the Black Woodstock in the summer of '69. Week to week, there were these amazing performers. And so I made a list and every performer, every performer, including Gladys Knight and Nina Simone and Mahalia Jackson certainly, every performer came out of the church.

And our first, so it wasn't only cultural forms but our economic forums, you know, there were no White people putting money in the collection plates. And these Black institutions, our first institutions born under slavery, were totally sustained economically by Black people, and not by rich Black people, but by Black people putting pennies and nickels and dimes in the collection plate. You know, they had one form for the building, the building fund. And then one envelope for the preacher, you know, and that was the Cadillac Fund, we used to call it, irreverently. And then a missionary envelope. And people would tithe. It was a self-sustaining, economic institution.

So Black people, through the church, became capitalists early on. And I think that we have underutilized the potential of the Black church. And what do I mean by that? Well, I have many Jewish friends who, when we were in college, used to say they were forced to go to Hebrew school on Saturday, right? And, you know, they hated Hebrew school, but they learned their language, their people's tradition and culture and about Judaism all through Hebrew school.

I have one friend, as you know I was a graduate student in Cambridge, England, and one friend who is a professor of law now, Willie Forbath, we used to have these arguments and he'd say, you know, being Jewish is religious. And if you're an atheist like I am, you're not really Jewish. And I'd go, oh, well, you know, you're Jewish, I'm not, I can't tell you. But I think it's cultural, you know, And then fifteen years later, Glenn, we are awakened in the middle of the night and I say, Willie, what's happening? He said, well, Judy just had a baby. And I said, well, what did you call the baby? He said, Moses. (Laughter)

I think, and one of my producers is Japanese. Her kids go to Japanese school every Saturday. I think Sunday school should be Black History School, but it should also be computer school, and it should be proto-capitalist school. You know when people learn how economics works, people learn how to save, people know how the market works, people learn how to defer gratification, and that was the key to our survival, deferred

gratification, and that's the key to wealth accrual, without a doubt. And I wish all professional athletes had to take a course in how to save their money and defer gratification. They would potentially be one of the biggest economic forces collectively in the United States. And far too often, they end up bankrupt or, you know, not profiting from their talents the way they should.

GLENN HUTCHINS: So one practical lesson here for business executives is the Black church and its related institutions, schools, social service agencies, after-school programs, whatever it might be, are an important vector along which people can interact with this community?

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Yes, because the network is already in place. You don't have to reinvent the wheel, so it's cheaper.

GLENN HUTCHINS: Like we did with the meals distribution program.

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: You got it.

GLENN HUTCHINS: Stood it up in a couple of days because the network was already in place. Okay, so let's move on to *Reconstruction*, which sounds a part of our distant past, but has – in your view – relevance to today, which we'll come back to. But Skip's

documentary immediately before *The Black Church was Reconstruction: America After the Civil War*. It was accompanied by a very, very good book called *Stony the Road*. And let's show a clip of that, and we'll talk a little bit about *Reconstruction*.

(Video Clip - Not Transcribed)

GLENN HUTCHINS: I would highly recommend people watch that. As a product of some pretty good schools, myself including ___ teachers I admire about reconstruction until I watched the documentary and read the book. Skip, why is reconstruction relevant today?

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Twelve years of Black freedom followed by an outright rollback. Eight years of a Black president followed by an outright rollback. Reconstruction, today's era, post-Obama, is a mirror of reconstruction. So that's why I decided to make the reconstruction story. Actually, it was in the middle of Barack Obama's first term and I happened to be at Ferris State University in Michigan, which has the world's only Jim Crow collection, the Jim Crow Center. And they collect all that racist memorabilia that, you know, has been part of western culture for centuries and centuries.

And, Glenn, already in the middle of Barack Obama's first term, they had a whole

section of racist representations of Michelle and Barack Obama, and I was horrified. And I realized that while many intellectuals, Black and White, were declaring, celebrating so-called the end of race and the end of racism because they had these new kinds of Black people in the White House, that the slumbering beast of White supremacy had begun to rear its ugly head. Zora Hurston, in her great novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, has this phrase, when the flood comes – it's in the Florida Everglades – and she says, “the monstropolous beast has left its bed.” And that's what happened with White Supremacy.

And we're seeing it play out today inadvertently through no fault of its own. The election of our first Black president really tapped a nerve in a lot of people. These issues were simmering, seething, underground, under the surface, you know, barely concealed, and they rose up with a horrible, terrible vengeance as we saw on January 6th.

So reconstruction, to summarize, W.E.B. DuBois wrote the first honest account of reconstruction in 1935 called, *Black Reconstruction*. And he has this marvelous quote. It says, “The slave went free; stood for a brief moment in the sun, and then moved back again toward slavery.” So what did he mean? All right, the Civil War ends in April 1865. The 13th Amendment is ratified December 6, 1865, and that's what officially abolished slavery. It was not the Emancipation Proclamation. It was the 13th Amendment. But in that same month, the Ku Klux Klan was born so that should have been a wakeup call to

everybody who was busy celebrating this new birth of freedom.

The 14th Amendment was ratified in 1868, and we know the 14th Amendment established birthright citizenship and the equal protection clause, equal protection under the law. Do you ever wonder why there are only 33 nations in the world that have birthright citizenship and we are the largest probably? It's because they couldn't figure out, after the Dred Scott Decision in 1857, which said that Black people were never meant to be citizens by the founders, they had to figure out how to make them citizens. So hence the 14th Amendment.

And then finally, the 15th Amendment ratified in April 1870, which gave all Black men the right to vote. But here's the surprising thing, all Black men in the south, in the former Confederacy, got the right to vote three years before, in 1867, because of the first Reconstruction Act, which was passed in March 1867. So in the summer of 1867, I call it the First Freedom Summer, all Black men in the south got the right to vote when Black men in the north at this time, free Black men, could only vote in five of the six New England states and in the state of New York if they satisfied a \$250 property requirement. That's something that is counterintuitive. We think that because the northern states abolished slavery long before the Civil War, they abolished slavery but they wouldn't give Black men the right to vote. But Black men in the south got the right to vote.

Now, Glenn, most of these men were illiterate because it was illegal to teach the formerly enslaved to read and write. And 90% of our ancestors were enslaved, 10% were free. Of the free, about half were in the south and half were in the north. So you had all these illiterate Black men. So how did they respond to the right to vote? Eighty percent of them registered to vote, man.

One of the great, most moving moments in filming *Finding Your Roots*, is when I showed Congressman John Lewis – the closest thing to a saint I've ever met – his great-great grandfather, Tobias Carter, I showed him Tobias Carter's voter registration certificate in Alabama in the summer of 1867. And John, Glenn, he froze and then his head just, boom, hit the table, man, he wept like a baby. I cried too. It was deeply moving. Then we figured nobody in his family, because of voter suppression, voted between Tobias Carter and John Lewis, because of the Voting Rights Act.

So 80% of all the Black men in the south registered to vote and in 1868 they cast their ballots for Ulysses S. Grant. Now Grant won the electoral college overwhelmingly but he only won the popular vote by 300,000 ballots. Five hundred thousand Black men voted in 1868 to elect Ulysses S. Grant president. So, in effect, Black men can say that they had elected a president. And between 1870 and 1877, the golden age of reconstruction, those Black men elected 16 Black men to Congress, including two who were appointed

to the United States Senate and 14 elected to the House. But after 1877, it all began to dissipate because of the Hayes Tilden Compromise, when the north, or the Union, Washington, withdrew the federal troops that were protecting Black men's right to vote.

And I'll tell you how dramatic it was. It starts in 1890. Each former Confederate state rewrote their state constitution and they didn't include race-specific language, just as we see happening today throughout the south and throughout Republican-dominated states. No race specific language. But they instituted poll taxes, literacy tests that only my fellow university professor, Larry Tribe, could pass, and property requirements. It was horrible.

And I'll tell you how effective it was. You know we tend to forget that South Carolina, Mississippi and Louisiana were majority Black states. And I want to repeat that. South Carolina, Mississippi and Louisiana were majority Black states. Florida, Alabama and Georgia were almost majority Black states. So it was like a mini-Black republic. And the former Confederate said this is too much Black power and we have to denude that power. And so with these new state constitutions, they effectively took away the right to vote for Black men in the south.

How effective was it? In 1898, Louisiana, 130,000 Black men registered to vote. By 1904, after the passage of the new state constitution in Louisiana, that number had

been reduced precisely to 1,342. That's amazing. And that's what some people would like to see happen, particularly in Stacey Abrams' state. We talk about, is church still relevant? Stacey Abrams couldn't have turned Georgia without the role of the church. And that's why we have to fight all of these attempts to restrict the right to vote because they are aimed at Black people.

GLENN HUTCHINS: Let's come back to that in a minute. There was also the prison, prison labor was used as an instrumentality. Correct?

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Totally. Peonage, you know they established vagrancy laws. So a bunch of Black guys could be standing on a corner and they could be arrested and they ended up on the chain gang. Remember all those...

GLENN HUTCHINS: What a lot of people don't realize is an exception inside the 13th Amendment to abolish slavery was for people who committed crimes.

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: You got it, and man, they drove a truck through that loophole and they rounded up Black men. After all, cotton continued to be the leading export crop in the United States through the 1930s and cotton, as you know, is labor-intensive. Somebody had to pick that cotton. The south made enormous profits, all because they had free labor. Right? Slavery. So they substituted one form of free labor

with another form of free labor, which was the penal colony, the prison population.

GLENN HUTCHINS: And the Civil War monuments that were established 25 years after the Civil War?

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Yes, well, that's when the narrative was rewritten from a war to end slavery to a war between the states, which quickly morphed into a war between brothers. At the 50th anniversary re-enactment of Gettysburg, they did not allow one Black person to go to Gettysburg, to attend that commemoration. Black people explicitly were forbidden to attend. And then they had the re-enactments with former Confederates and former members of the Union and they, like Pickett's Charge, charged each other. When they got to the middle of the battlefield, they threw down their weapons, hugged each other and cried, and asked, how could we have killed – 750,000 Americans died in the Civil War – 750,000, how could we have killed each other to save these Black people?

So by the turn of the century, the north had abandoned Black people and so had the south. Remember the Supreme Court affirms "separate but equal" in 1896, four years before the end of the century. And all these textbooks appear, which are rewriting reconstruction, making it the meanest, nastiest, unfortunate episode in the history of democracy.

I want to read you a quote. My hero, she's a nefarious anti-hero, Mildred Lewis Rutherford, who was the historian general of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and she published a book – Glenn, I made my graduate students read this book – if anybody wanted to throw up. But it was called, *The Measuring Rod*. And *The Measuring Rod* was sent to all the libraries in America and all the teachers teaching American history. And it had a list of 20 principals, and I'm going to read you three. It said, reject a book that says the south fought the Civil War to hold their slaves. Reject a book that speaks of the slaveholder of the south as cruel and unjust. And then my favorite, reject a book that glorifies Abraham Lincoln.

Her common core, in other words, was the lost cause and that's what it was called. This whole effort to rewrite history and to put a rosy glow on the Confederacy and slavery like it was a romantic time of feudal relations in America, when Black people loved their masters and the masters loved their primitive, childlike enslaved workers. It was horrible. And then out of that effort came the creation of those monuments.

So when I see those monuments, I see this attempt to wipe away, first of all, the contributions in the Civil War, 200,000 Black men in the army and the navy and then the contributions of Black men to reconstruction. Reconstruction was the first experiment with interracial democracy in the history of the United States. Do you know that public schools didn't exist before the Civil War? And public schools came out of those

interracial reconstruction governments in the former Confederacy, which were soon wiped out, with the rollback of reconstruction. Glenn, you're muted.

GLENN HUTCHINS: Thank you. I was getting an echo. So place the attempts to rewrite the history of the January 6th insurrection in the context of this. Are we seeing history repeating itself?

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Absolutely. It is, the big lie has come back. And I've never seen anything like this. I was watching CNN last night. Seventy-five percent of Republicans think the election was rigged. You know, what's that about, man? I think that because we have so many forms of alternative media, that there's not a unified story that, we, the people of America hear or can tell ourselves, so that's true. And I think the proliferation of media outlets is a really good thing, of course. But the fact that this one bizarre narrative is embraced by such a large percentage of one of our major parties is flabbergasting.

GLENN HUTCHINS: But it's also, you're saying nothing new, it's a page out of the old textbook.

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: It is reconstruction, the rollback to reconstruction all over again.

GLENN HUTCHINS: So we've got, I think, two or three minutes before Barbara is going to cut us off. Time flies. Let's go back to the purpose of this series that we're doing at the Economic Club. What can American business people learn from this? And what can they do? Obviously, quite notably, a number of businesses have taken stands on the voting rights questions in states like Texas, and Florida, and Georgia. So what, along those lines, can the business community, how should they think about this? And how would you recommend they act?

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Well, two ways. One in terms of vetting educational programs and the other in terms of understanding what a comprehensive fix would be. Okay, let me take the latter one. No one knows what it would take for the curve of class within the Black community to equal the curve of class in the White community. What am I saying? The percentage of Black people in the middle class would be the same as the percentage of White people in the middle class. The percentage of Black people in the upper class would be the same as for White people. And the percentage of Black people in the lower end of the spectrum would be the same.

What would it actually cost to effect that end? I would like to see the business community commission an ideologically neutral think tank to do a study to say, okay, this is what it would take? And Glenn, you know one night you and I were talking and you did a back of the envelope calculation and we were talking about \$10 trillion, you

know we were just riffing. But I would really like to know with sophisticated economists on the left and on the right saying, all right, we're not going to blame anybody, we're going to say this outcome was produced, unfortunately, through all kinds of mistakes and bad decisions. But this is what going forward it would take to cure the problems of systemic racism as have manifested themselves economically.

Simultaneously, I'd like to see scholars develop, look at all the after-school programs, for example. You know, I have one, I'm on a board where all the students in the inner-city schools play chess. And one of the members of our board at the Hutchins Center, Claire Muñana in Chicago, has a squash program and so all the kids after school play squash. I don't know, I mean would it be better for all the kids at the inner-city schools to play chess and squash? You know we need to know which things can scale up, what things actually work, and we don't know. Even I, as a professor, am hit for donations to 100 different kinds of programs, and I have no idea which ones are meaningful...

GLENN HUTCHINS: But, you know, the biggest number, when we did that quick math, the biggest number was equally funding education across this country. As the very last thing, we're out of time, talk a little bit about what that issue is.

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Yes, I think that, you know, now we have local option, as it were, when all school districts, all school funding is local. And I mean it varies county to

county and I think it could be nationalized, or at least equalized by state so that you shouldn't be punished because you're living in a neighborhood with a low tax base. Right? So that the amount of money spent per child per school is the same at Princeton High School or in all the high schools in Bedford-Stuy, you know...

GLENN HUTCHINS: Or in Trenton High right down the street.

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Yes, absolutely. And until we do that, you are being, it's double jeopardy. You know you're in a school district because you're poor and your kids are going to end up being poor because they're in bad school district, going to bad schools. I even think we should pay more money per student for our worse schools. Teachers should get combat pay to encourage them, entice them to be there. Until we correct the problem of public-school education, we are going to see the systemic manifestations of deep structural problems, punishing our society and our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren for time immemorial.

So it's time for us to address that problem. The roots of racism are economic.

Everybody on this webinar knows that. It's all about the Benjamins. It's all about the Benjamins. Glenn is fond of saying that everything that Marx said about economics was right, and everything he said about politics was wrong. And it's true, it's true. It's all about, based on super struct.

GLENN HUTCHINS: So we'll end where we started with Skip preaching to us. And Skip, thank you very much. You're a national treasure.

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Thank you, my brother.

GLENN HUTCHINS: Barbara, over to you.

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: Thanks, Barbara.

PRESIDENT BARBARA VAN ALLEN: Oh, absolutely. Thanks to both of you. We so appreciate your insights today and the time that you took to join us. Much appreciated. I'm delighted to report we still have a few more great speakers lined up this summer before we take our, most of August will be a break in programming and we'll return in mid-September. So we do invite you, encourage you to invite guests to our events.

Next up is Nancy Lazar, the Partner and Co-Founder of Cornerstone Macro. She'll join us on July 19th. She'll be giving us some insights on the global economy, her outlook for growth, inflation, productivity and other macro variables. And for our summer finale, we have some really cool stuff. We've got Tony Malkin, the Chairman and President and CEO of Empire State Realty Trust, in an interview with Gayle King. That will be July, 26th, and they're going to talk about a lot of things but significantly the future of

commercial real estate in New York City, what that's going to look like going forward. On August 2, we're going to bring back by popular demand, Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the resident fellow at American Enterprise Institute and the 23rd Commissioner of the FDA. He will be with Becky Quick, the Squawk Box Co-Anchor. They're going to talk about the implications of the new Delta variant among other things.

And we're finalizing our last couple of events. Coming up also, Floyd Abrams, the Senior Counsel with Cahill, Gordon & Reindel. He will be actually touching base on the First Amendment issues that are very timely right now. And then we have Steve Cadigan, the Founder of Cadigan Talent Ventures on his new book, *Workquake*. It's all about bringing folks back to work and strategies for doing that as we go into this, hopefully post-Covid period. We also just want to announce in the fall, Hans Vestberg, the Chairman and CEO of Verizon, will be joining us September 13th to speak on the future of telecommunications, 5G and a lot of other issues. And then John Williams, our very own Chairman of The Economic Club of New York, he will be, in his capacity as CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, addressing the Club September 19th and will give insights on the economic outlook.

And then I just want to be sure to thank our members of the Centennial Society that joined us today for their contributions as they help to make this kind of program possible. And, of course, if you joined as a guest and are interested in learning about

membership, please use the email address on the screen to reach out to us. Again, thank you for joining us today and please stay healthy and safe.