Gaz Oakleyu2019s vegan reversal

many many years on now, 10 years on of of strictly eating plant-based and now connecting with nature and growing my food. The the vegan rule set doesn't fit within that. I I just want to eat as locally as possible. I want to know where every item of food has come from.

I I want to know like the farmer that grew it if I haven't grown it myself. I struggle to talk about this and this is probably the first conversation I've had in public about this.

>> Hi everyone. So, this comment was from last week. I'm not vegan but I can't stand this level of inauthenticity. It's so clear he was never in it for the animals. This comment, of course, was talking about Gaz Oakley and the many other comments pouring into Plant Based News and other similar channels every day. Gaz Oakley told the world he was no longer vegan several weeks ago but this is the story that's not going away. People are still getting fired up. So, the question we want to ask and answer today isn't what did Gaz do but instead why will this story not go away?

>> Okay, so what's wild is we actually saw this coming. I don't know if you remember but we talked about this on our podcast a few months before he actually confirmed he wasn't vegan and I said at the time it really looked like Gaz was heading towards announcing exactly this and here we are. Not just proved right but proved right and then watching it rumble on for months afterwards. Are you both surprised by this? Probably not but what I'm really actually surprised by is the intensity of the reaction across the internet.

>> It's so true. Let's um why don't we back up and start where this all started. Let's go to the clip of Gaz saying he's not going to be vegan anymore.

>> Uh things like pigeon as well, and you know, um American crayfish that are just destroying the waterways and invasive species that have to be >> Human intervention now, isn't it?

>> Yeah, we need to become the wolf. So, it's something I'm learning. It's like, you know, that's why I don't call myself vegan anymore and I'm not sure this would upset a lot of people. Part of the sort of struggle to talk about this and then this is probably the first conversation I've had in public about this. I I I I dropped that label just because I just want to be a bit more free and and nothing's linear. I want to do a challenge where I only eat local food um in the near future and that will probably see me eating invasive species like crayfish or venison or pigeon. I don't know. Um something I'll look at in the future. >> Okay, guys, I want to first, before I want to hear from you both, but I want to um get into some of the ways the internet responded to this topic. Let's start off with Mike the Vegan. Here's Mike here and today Gaz Oakley has declared that he is no longer a vegan. He was really a major chef in the vegan scene years back. He's a content creator. He has 1.7 million Instagram followers and he used to be Avant Garde Vegan. Now, he was super popular. It was to the point where I would even see his videos played in like vegan restaurants and other establishments and now he's not just ditching the vegan label like we've seen a few times where people are continuing to eat fully plant-based. He's saying "No, I've introduced some animal products." And he says you will soon see him eating deer and other animals. >> His name is Gaz Oakley. Here's a little clip of him being featured on Plant Based News.

>> [music] >> Hello, I'm Gaz Oakley of Avant Garde Vegan. I'm a vegan chef, YouTuber, and cookbook author and I'm doing an interview with Plant Based News today. >> And here [music] he is speaking in front of a full crowd at the Vegan Camp Out in the United Kingdom where he's from.

>> [music] >> And he's got 1.84 million followers on his YouTube channel. So, when a person of this size quits being vegan, it's a pretty big deal. So, let's wrap our mind around the timeline here. He seems to have gone vegan around 2015.

Internet backlash and identity debate

He then says he stopped calling himself a vegan four or five years ago. >> I just dropped all labels. I haven't mentioned the word vegan in [music] any of my videos for about four or five years. I dropped that label just because I just want to be a bit more free and and nothing's linear, I think. >> So, he only called himself a vegan for like five or six years, but says he continued to eat fully plant-based for 10 years till what seems to be about a year ago. Then, he starts eating that local fish and eggs that he got in Wales in his rural homestead from neighbors and then doesn't mention it publicly until May 2026.

>> Struggle to talk about this. I mean, this is probably the first conversation I've had in public about this. I went plant-based 10 year 10 years ago and was very strictly vegan, you know, following the rule set.

>> Okay, this kind of language really bugs me. Strictly vegan? I mean, you either are vegan or you're not. There's nothing strict about it. And talking about this rule set? I mean, what kind of veganism were you following? It sounds like you went down some crazy path. I mean, here is the rule set and it's not even a rule set. It's the definition. It's simply a moral stance against animal cruelty and exploitation, not viewing animals as objects to be exploited for your human benefit. >> And you know, you look at the atrocities that industrial farming and intensive animal agriculture is is hell on earth, you know, these these sheds that these animals are kept in is is awful and I watched a few documentaries and it was enough to make me think, "Wow, I need to do the complete opposite of this and go plant-based and vegan and just shun it completely." >> Okay, but >> However, you know, many many years on now, 10 years on of of strictly eating plant-based and now connecting with nature and growing my food, the the vegan rule set doesn't fit within that.

>> Well, you can connect with nature and be vegan, right? I mean, there's some months where I'm vegan and I I don't connect with nature at all. There are other months where, again, I continue to be vegan and I completely connect with nature. So, I don't really know what he's talking about.

>> I think it's a fallacy, personally. I think it's like a way to kind of segue into now I'm a homesteader and now I'm doing this and I'm doing that. I do understand what he says when he says, you know, he wants to wear natural fibers. He wants to, you know, grow his own food. He wants to know who grew grew his food. But, I believe that he could still have done that and still continued to not exploit animals. I don't think that they were mutually exclusive. I don't think you have to do one or the other. He could have done both. He has the resources. He has his land. He has everything.

I feel like it's a little bit of an excuse and I find it a little bit disappointing. >> Let's go back to Mike the Vegan. >> As as humans, we can't get all of the the nutrients from a plant-based diet without supplementing. This is the same for like the vegans will go mad because this is the same for like modern meat eaters. Meat isn't as nutrient dense as it was when it's it's farmed in the intensive ways that it's grown in nowadays. So, you're having to take B12 or the the cows themselves are supplemented with B12. But, I don't want to take synthetic what they call supplements nowadays.

>> So, I'm happy he at least admitted that B12 is being used on animals as well. But, that brings us to his most unhinged statement yet. >> Cuz I'm like, you know, that factory that the synthetic supplements were made in could have been woodland before. >> But, at this point, I'm feeling like there's a bit of gaslighting going on or should I call it gazlighting? Okay, I just I just had to make a stupid pun. Like, I have to say, this feels intellectually dishonest to me. Like, oh, we we should just not have any buildings at all because they could be woodlands. When the reality is that the entire world's like 10 or 20,000 kg of B12 is made in just a handful of factories. Like this is not a land use issue, especially when compared to the land used by animal agriculture, which is a third of our ice-free land. Which we once again need to remember would expand if we shifted to non-factory farming, if we were just grazing animals, because it takes them twice or more as long to reach slaughter weight due to the low calorie content of grazing. So, that's not looking good. But again, in terms of B12, it's important to note that the majority of B12 production is also fed to animals.

55% of sales goes to animal feed for B12. However, that is not human-grade, is not quite as refined, and it is sold in larger bulk amounts. So, we don't know. It could be as much as 80% of the B12. It's sort of an unstudied figure.

But I can't be vegan because B12 factories could be forest is the most wild take ever. >> He's not going to have supplements because the factories that make the supplements could have been producing woodland. That's destroying nature. >> Yeah, he basically said like if there weren't the supplements factories, that would have been a woodland.

>> [gasps] >> And the whole point is just like, right, so our entire society wouldn't exist if we didn't have buildings. And Mike the vegan's point is like there are a couple of factories across the world that make the entire global whatever it's called supply of B12 supplements. And that's in a small amount of factories. It's not a land issue. Like B12 supplements are not a land issue. Do you know what is a land issue? Animal agriculture of any form. >> Especially grass-fed extensive livestock grazing. >> Have none.

>> [snorts] >> She doesn't even know what to say. >> [laughter] >> Do you know what is funny though is um Happy Healthy Vegan comes up with a solution for Gaz. And he basically says like, okay, Gaz says he's done for doing second hand leather for example." So, Happy Healthy Vegan says >> All hope is not lost here. I have a brilliant workaround that Gaz can use so he can take his supplements that were made in a factory where a forest should be. Anyway, all he has to do is buy them second hand, right? Just have someone buy the supplements first and then sell them to a thrift store and then Gaz can go thrifting and buy his supplements second hand just like his leather and all moral issues are gone. It's totally cool now, right? So, Gaz, you can take your supplements. Just buy them second hand. Just have a friend buy them for you first and have your friend just kind of sell them to you a little bit later.

>> The whole thing is a complete farce. It's ridiculous. >> joke to say that like, you know, the supplement factories are taking land that we could have had as forests. Animal agriculture and regenerative regenerative farming are taking huge amounts of land that could be used to grow crops that could feed the entire global population. Whereas right now, animal agriculture is only providing 18% of the world's calories and millions of people are starving. Taking more land is not the solution to this. We We're not all in that privileged position. Like, we can't live that way, which is why factory farming exists. And sure, he does say factory farming is abhorrent, horrible. We agree, but I don't believe it's better to still take an animal's life for your food when you don't need to.

Health, supplements, and local food arguments

>> So, to balance the ecosystem, he's going to be eating various animals like highly sentient deer, which he's already using the euphemism venison for, already separating himself from that animal. But, he continues to paint this pastoral appeal to Nirvana. >> Or maybe shown like a community in my native country of Wales a few hundred years ago where we lived off the land, we grew our food, we only ate meat when it became available, whether it was like we went fishing or we hunted a local like an animal and, you know, meat wasn't on every every plate and we just lived and ate locally in harmony with the the environment around us. You would think, now that's the life's that's the way of eating that I need to follow [snorts] and I would have done that not done >> The other extreme opposite is going vegan. So yeah, it appears that he would rather LARP medieval Welsh homesteading than find a healthy balance in which he grows as much vegan food as possible and then fills in a couple little gaps. He can use vegan fertilizer instead of manure, etc. That's why this is starting to feel a little bit more to me like a creature comfort thing of like, oh the way the world's going it just seems so much nicer to get back to the way things were when instead he could be facing the reality of the world that things have moved on.

>> There was a comment under one of these videos which said, it has become very clear to me that Gaz simply wants to hunt, eat, and use animal products. The problem is that he just can't admit it. Instead, he's making these wild excuses and unfortunately, very familiar excuses which I would have to agree with.

Someone else was saying, you know, he was talking about trying to live how people lived in the past or whatever, but we don't see him giving up his car, for example. >> He's talking about eating invasive species. What's the most invasive species on this planet?

>> It's us. We're the biggest >> humans. So is he going to pick up cannibalism next? >> I don't know. Is he helping out the planet by eating some people? I mean, the reasoning just doesn't make sense.

>> There's this comment here that says, what irks me the most about Gaz is he built a platform for profit and has hidden the fact that he's no longer vegan for the past 5 years. This is dishonest.

>> Is that true? >> I think it was kind of like a slow burn. That's kind of what the video from Dreadie Vet says, which we can throw in. He basically talks about the fact that slowly but surely that the terminology was changing, the wording was changing and people were noticing it. He was called Avant-Garde Vegan. Klaus, you interviewed him on PBN a number of times, promoted him, his books were everywhere, Avant Gard Vegan. But you'll notice Jonathan that in this interview where he reveals it, he says, "I went plant-based about 10 years ago." No, you didn't. You were vegan and you were speaking about being vegan for ethics the whole time and suddenly, retrospectively, it's plant-based now. So it's easier to kind of say, "Well, I never was vegan." Lies.

>> I just need to get this off my chest. I 100% agree, Sarah. When I interviewed him in 2017 for the first time in East London near Old Street, okay? He said the thing that inspired him and turned him vegan uh was Gary Yourofsky. Now, we don't need to get into Gary Yourofsky's message, but Gary Yourofsky is an animal liberation activist, okay? So he did not get into veganism through some kind of subtle, slow, plant-based burner of a transition. >> It's frustrating because yeah, I think the dishonesty comes from the fact that it's easy to change it now and say, "I never was that way, so it's fine. It was just about the food for me. I'm just a chef. It was only food." But he actually was an ethical vegan. He was.

>> And now it makes so much more sense of why people are up in arms on the internet about him. Um because this is a very um textbook identity threat response, right? Like for a lot of vegans for a lot of us vegans, this isn't a diet. That's not why we do this. It's a core part of who we are, our identity. It's how we see ourselves and our own morality. And so when there's someone who's visible in this space, obviously, Klaus, you you interviewed him and trusted, very trusted in the space, and they step away from that identity, it doesn't just feel like someone's changing their mind or changing the items on a menu, right?

It feels it feels like it makes you wonder if their whole belief system was ever solid, right? You doubt that. And I think that's why this reaction is so disproportionate to like the actual act of, you know, somebody just eating differently, right? That's how I think meat eaters would say it. Why why are plant-based people going all up in arms? He's just choosing a different He's just choosing to eat a little bit differently, but it's so much deeper than that, isn't it, folks? >> Now, this is a step too far in my opinion. This might be the most wild reaction we've ever seen to Gaz Oakley and his thinking he's no longer vegan. A page on Facebook was reported to show someone burning his book on their barbecue.

>> Because If it wasn't tragic, it would be hilarious, but yeah, it's pretty bad move. Pretty bad move. And this is this is a reflection of how much it annoyed people, but it was taken way too far. And it's insane that there are so many comments even this week just like flying in about this topic. >> Yeah.

>> It's crazy. >> It it really is. And I think I will say that I think the reaction in some cases has been a little harsh. Like I do not condone the burning of anyone's book. That is wrong. That is giving like fascism aspects that that we don't want to obviously go into that, but that is not right. But I get, like you said, why people are so upset. I I kind of just I wish that it it kind of shows sometimes the vegan community in a bit of like a not so nice light because some of the reactions have been so extreme. And I don't necessarily feel like it welcomes people cuz they might feel like, "Oh, if I go vegan and I speak about it publicly, then are people going to do this to me?" Like it's kind of almost like a pitchfork kind of situation.

>> Yeah. >> I absolutely agree with you there. I I mean, I would 100% pump the brakes. >> Should we do the health reasons one just to give Shabnam something to kind of comment on because that is quite interesting in a different angle, maybe. >> He actually did the last subject here, and that is health. He sort of pulled a Alex O'Connor or Cosmic Skeptic or he went, "Oh, I have some mystery health issue that I'm not going to talk about so you can't actually really respond to it." And in this case, it seems even less serious cuz as he posted on Instagram, "After 10 years of eating a entirely plant-based and supplementing appropriately, I began experiencing some health issues." Following advice and after a lot of thought, I introduced a small amount of animal foods into my diet again, being eggs and wild fish.

And he says eggs from rescued hens, but I have to ask you, the comment section, if you reestablish an exploitative relationship with rescued animals, would they then need to be rescued again? So I'm just reading into the small amount of information we have here, but some health issues is not like some serious debilitating health issues, etc. He doesn't say he went to see a plant-based doctor or a nutritionist. So, we have no idea what's going on, but it seems just like a nice little out. Like, "Oh, yeah, it was my health, so, you know, you can't really come at me." But, it's also interesting because people claim the DHA aspect for fish. He's not doing that here. Obviously, you can get that from algae, but a lot of these local extreme fish don't even have high levels of DHA.

And also, just have to counter with vegan health crushing it. For example, the recent meta-analysis that found that vegans have 22% lower risk of all cancers combined. So, I don't think that's personally the best choice. And then, once again, he added eggs. What is the nutrient in eggs that he's not getting? What is the particular one? I would love to know what he thinks happened there, but that's all he says. In the end, I am grateful that he was vegan for the time that he was and got a lot of people to eat great recipes, learn how to cook, etc. But, I just don't really buy his reasons. I feel like it's this cultural shift that he had by being in rural Wales, trying to integrate with his neighbors, not being the weird vegan, using the term vegan, finding that to be more important. Maybe I'm reading into it, but the reasons he's coming up with afterwards, like the B12 factory could have been Woodlands, just don't make sense. They seem like a post hoc explanation for his behavior. >> Well, we can't really make a comment on someone's health without having any information on it. We have nothing to talk about. >> [laughter] >> Except for the fact that there's another crutch or another reason to support this transition or this choice of behavior change. But, the evidence is very clear that you can get all nutrients, macronutrients, caloric needs all satisfied with a whole food plant-based diet, if that's what you want to do.

>> Guys didn't want to do it when he couldn't make any money from it, did he? He didn't want to do it when there was with that.

Homesteading, leather, and authenticity critiques

>> Clap is mic drop double. >> [gasps] >> I need that in there. >> [laughter] >> And my reaction. Keep my reaction to class as mic drop, please. >> He had Wagamama's, yeah? >> Yep.

>> A UK leading restaurant. And they they bought the hype, but they're corporations, so I understand why they jump on it. 80, 70, 80% vegan menu, then they jump off it when the vegan isn't trending, yeah? I get that. Gaz Oakley was a an author and an advocate. He had books. He had a channel name with vegan in it. He talked about animal liberation activists that had inspired him. He can't just jump off the bandwagon like that just because there's a bit more money in not doing that. I mean, I think it's a little bit that and mainly this dystopian idea of like going back to the land. I think in his head he's just got this stupid idea that going back is the way forward. Going forward sustainably means working with vehicles and roads and factories and a globalized food system cuz you know what? You can't change that. It means mindfully doing the right thing within that unfortunately kind of capitalist structure.

>> This is how he wants to live. He wants to live off the land, whatever. That's fine. I think the part that bothers me is the way he and the interviewers speak about it like this is the way everyone should live, which is so silly.

Literally, no. People can't do that. I mean, that would be such a Oh my god, such an enormous leap backwards for humanity. But also, most people don't want to. You know, most of us don't want to spend time growing our food. Now, he says you don't need a lot. You could easily just with a balcony, you can grow all the food you need. >> I think one of my biggest regrets actually wasn't starting to grow my food earlier when I lived in London because if I showed that on my small balcony that I had, I could have grown enough food just to feed myself. Um and with very little time invested.

>> That is literally not true. Like, what what? It's a choice for him. He seems happy. He says he was struggling with anxiety and depression and now he's not.

Terrific. You know, he genuinely seems happy with his choices and with his lifestyle, but that doesn't mean other people would be. And it doesn't mean it's the best choice in terms of animal welfare, sustainability. Sustainability-

wise, like we want people living more densely.

We don't want people living even more spread out. People have enough land to themselves as it is. And again, if that way worked, we would still be doing it.

We moved away from that sort of lifestyle because it was hard and it didn't feed people. People starved. Now, far fewer people starve because of industrialization. >> But homesteading is the new thing. It's the new it thing. It's the new trend. It's And arguably, hear me out, it's empowering people to take control of their own food system.

And that's what we hope. And I do hope people that homestead do 98, 99% fruits and vegetables. >> grains and whatever they can. But often time, people have chickens. All my friends here that have like backyard hens would die before they would kill their hen. They would rather lose a limb than kill their chicken or eat their chicken. They love them like their dogs.

>> But do they still eat chicken? >> Yeah, but not their chicken. That's the point I was trying to make. Like there's that massive disconnect and I'm like, "Cool, you won't eat Sally and John, but you'll go to Taco Bell or Chick-fil-A and get a sandwich and not think twice about it." Homesteading is in, right? People are really interested in taking some ownership over their own food. What if he's opening himself up to a totally different subset of followers and population that, like Klaus said, could be that new consumer that he's looking for. >> So, like me, the thought of wearing plastic leather shoes, which I once would have been so excited to find that Nike are making now a vegan version of the Air Force Ones, you know, in a in a plastic leather. would be The thought of wearing them and them maybe one day just falling on my compass pile, not that they would, but they were to and never giving back to the land, never decomposing is like, why would I why would I have that in my lifestyle?

>> Okay, so let me get this right. So now that you're living out in nature in the wild and you have some new things that you're vibing about in natural versus unnatural and plastic is not in alignment with your current values. So you're okay now with animals being killed because you have a thing against plastic because it doesn't decompose because it's unnatural. First of all, with this point of view, you absolutely disagree with what veganism is. You see animals as objects to be exploited for our benefit. If you see it morally justified to have animals slaughtered so you can have leather shoes.

When you can just have plastic ones that don't involve killing animals. >> giving back to the land, never decomposing is like, why would I why would I have that in my lifestyle? >> So Gaz says "I'll never wear the vegan leather, I'd only wear animal derived leather because the vegan leather never decomposes." Well, he's missing two key points. First of all, vegan leather can decompose. Again, I would recommend Gaz actually do some research rather than go with his vibes when he's sitting out in the forest there. Check out this study here about mushroom mycelium for developing leather-like materials and the study says It says "Overall, the results demonstrate mycelium based leathers as a biodegradable, low impact alternative that can replicate the visual and functional characteristics of traditional leather." In contrary to the gaslighting that Gaz is giving about vegan leather being not biodegradable, while his real animal derived leather is not completely biodegradable as well. Particularly, the chemicals immersed in it during the tanning are not biodegradable. In fact, there is over 170 chemicals used in tanning leather that could harm soil and animals and worsen air pollution. Bottom line is both vegan and non-vegan forms of leather have their plusses and minuses and both indeed have some environmental impacts that aren't that positive. But to choose one as the obvious single winner because it it's the best for the environment, it doesn't have any biodegrading problems, it's all natural, that's a bunch of If you If If they both have problems, it seems if you really had concerns about animal cruelty and exploitation, you would go with the one that didn't have to involve killing animals for you to have leather. >> I guess it's just moving the the video on Vegan Talk UK was so mad at Gaz Oakley for his switch um that they put his book in the trash.

>> [music] [music] [music] >> And we also have Fabien, aka Dread Vet, who gives a really insightful rundown on why he thinks Gaz Oakley is a complete fraud.

>> A fraud, strong words, strong words. >> I've been thinking a lot about the Gaz Oakley situation. Honestly, what keeps bothering me isn't simply that he isn't vegan anymore, honestly. People change, people reassess things, people abandon beliefs they once held. Like that's part of being human, all right? But But what really gets to me

and fascinates me is how often these transitions happen in the exact same way. Because you spend years building an audience around a particular ethical position. If you build or make books, businesses, partnerships, public identity, make money, and around the idea that that animals don't need to die for us to eat well or healthily or meaningfully or ethically, then moving away from the position is clearly a significant moment, and it deserves proactive honesty. It deserves clarity. It deserves a direct, honest conversation. And yet, what we always get over and over and over again is these really divisive soft launches. You know, he's on a podcast, or they just start saying it in their content, or there's a subtle change in the language. You go from vegan to plant-based, or there's a few comments in between conversation, or I really understand invasive species, or there's a gradual repositioning. Then, eventually, once enough people have noticed and there's a bit of a kickoff, a statement is released and explaining their situation. And that's what sits so uncomfortably. It feels like somebody's not bringing their audience on for their journey to understanding. It's clear It's clear It's to avoid the fallout of making a really bad or really un popular decision. Probably going to pop a little bit. Like, for me, one time I find really difficult is if you've changed your mind and you have a different different ethical position, just tell people. Just be up-front. If you've decided that animals you can now eat them is part of your world and they've become food again, tell people. Like, stand on business. Own it. Because what becomes so frustrating is people spend months repositioning themselves and then act as though everybody else in the vegan movement is so judgmental, is unreasonable to think for being frustrated. And it's not even about gaslighting. This is about a really clear pattern because every couple of days, every couple of weeks, every couple of months, we hear or see the same story from influencers. It's the same crap. Somebody builds a big following or even a smaller following from veganism, they become successful, and they get they become influential, or they And suddenly, out of nowhere, they become deeper connection to nature. Suddenly, it's Oh, it's not about me, it's about ultra-processed foods. That's the enemy. Suddenly, it's not about being within the city. It's actually we need to be out in the farm and grounding ourselves. Suddenly, it's a story about balance and listening to your body and science is out there to get us. And And what always strikes me and what's so obvious is how rarely the big ethical question is rarely addressed.

Fraud accusations, influencer dynamics, and political framing

Because we hear about digestion, we hear about hormones, we hear about wellness, we hear about healing, and we hear about personal journeys of understanding and growth. And somehow, somehow, somewhere within this, the animal that we're killing or consuming now disappears. Like the one being whose interests are supposedly at the center of one ethical movement suddenly just vanishes into thin air. Because like what people need to understand is veganism isn't about whether you like tofu or not or that you've got an allergy to pea protein or it's never about whether a burger came from a factory. It's never about soy or it was always a question whether another being should be consumed and pay with their life for our preferences. If your answer to question If your answer to that question has changed, just say so. Because it's exhausting watch people wrap that and layer it in wellness and and and and it's just like just own it. It's impossible to see it all the all these layers that you've decided suddenly are really important. Just own it. Just own it. And you know what you know what And honestly, I find something else that really pisses me off as well.

It's watching other plant-based vegan influencers in the space come out, give love hearts, "Oh, we love you. You know, it's a difficult decision." Like I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Like have sense. Make it make sense. Like I'll give you a really crude example. If you have a real ethical grounding in something that you hate, let's just say you um you don't believe in the oppression of women, okay? Really crude example. And someone shares that position with you, right?

And then this person says, "I don't believe in the oppression of women except this type." Do you go and applaud them for only a little bit oppressing that group of people? No. So, I don't know why we suddenly have this this this moral capacity to like oh, I get it. It's difficult. Still support you, mate.

Like I'm sorry, if you're a vegan influencer and you were there doing up sorry love heart da da da da da. I don't know what planet you're on, respectfully. And I understand we have to have open conversations and talk to each other, but I'm sorry. It's not good to also be in this space showing support for someone who has decided that the oppression of animals in and using terms like invasive species and clearly not having the best grounding and understanding in them is suddenly doing the thing that we've all been trying to focus on not doing. Do you see how that makes sense? The moment someone steps away from veganism, suddenly everyone wants to celebrate their

courage and their honest and their growth and their authenticity. And I just don't buy it because a lot of that support isn't because he's doing something. It's because essentially it's a relief for them. It's relief that somebody who once represented an uncomfortable challenge in veganism no longer does. It's relief that somebody who once really forced the question to think about animals differently has now been able to show them and make them feel comfortable comfortable again. It's relief that someone who supposedly disrespected the status quo has now found a return to it. And the applause and the celebration of that courage is not because oh, we're celebrating his integrity. It's because it's it's it's proof to them that this method this way of living doesn't work and it they were right the whole time. It's it's shows conformity they are part of. That's the problem. But like I mean, I'll be honest with you. I'm not entirely surprised by any of this because this is how social media works.

And I think within the vegan movement or any movement to be honest with you, influence does not represent a good ethical conviction or grounding. It doesn't. They are not the same at all. Influence is rewarded with adapting to the market. Really simple. And when you're committed to something, essentially you stay in your place even when being someone else would be much easier. And I think social media has made it increasingly difficult to tell the difference between an influencer and someone actually committed. Like it's so easy to be seduced by the aesthetics of Gaz Oakley's work. Like, you know, he's he's got his garden, he's got his growing his own food, he's grounding himself, and everything looks like it's filmed on on some old school film even though it's clearly just a DSLR with a filter over it. We're seduced by his fantastic looking food, his lovely gardens, you know, beautiful people. It matches the aesthetic that's really easy to consume. And And And we see confidence and assume there must be a commitment to what we see. We see popularity with millions of followers and assume that this person is a mark of depth and investigation and insight. And then And then And then we're shocked to discover that somebody has pivoted. But like, why are we really shocked? I mean, that's also really the learning here. Why are we shocked? Like, the entire social media influence profession is built on maintaining relevance. And the people that we give so much influence to is built on attention. And when attention shifts, essentially what we're saying is is that their ability to make money is at risk. And people will sell themselves out over and over again to protect that level of influence. And when audience change when audiences change, many influence will change with them. We've seen this a billion times before. Because the market doesn't reward your commitment to something that isn't profitable. It rewards your ability to create new ways to be adaptable and and make money and be consumed. And maybe for me, that's the real lesson here. Maybe we need to stop looking for these like heroes via social media and stop looking for the perfect vegan influencer who embodies this movement. And we go, "Oh, did it it." Because movements don't survive because of charisma and and and centering our views around one person or a group of people. They survive because ordinary people like me and you are committed to the principles when nobody else is watching us. When when And it's whether it's regardless if we make money from it or not, we're still there. And it's not whether Gaz Oakley is right or wrong. I have my own thoughts about that. The question is is is this. What do people truly believe when believing it, veganism, whatever, no longer benefits them? Because that's where the commitment begins. And increasingly, we're finding that that's exactly where influencers end. That's where it stops. >> And on the other end of the spectrum, Natalie Portman presented Gaz Oakley's fall from veganism through describing a vegan to fascist pipeline. Let's go to the clip.

>> People always think I'm crazy when I talk about this, but fascism and anti-vegan ideology go hand in hand. Here's an example. >> You have no connection to where your food's coming from. Veganism Veganism is fine because, you know, you just go to the supermarket, you buy just vegan things. When you have a connection to where the food's coming from, it's like questions why why would I go and pick up that tofu that block of tofu or that um faux meat. >> That's Gaz Oakley, who built his brand as a vegan chef. But a few years ago, he left the city for a rural homestead, and now he wants to eat invasive animals. I'm not saying Gaz is a fascist, but the way he talks about this is playing into the urban versus rural divide, which is at the heart of far-right politics. Saying vegans are disconnected from nature, from reality, and from their food. Real people eat real food from the local land. Far-right ideology loves this rhetoric. Cities are filled with woke, out-of-touch liberals, but the countryside is authentic and pure. And fueling that division isn't an accident because a population at war with itself is easier to radicalize and control. And this idea that eating local is better for the climate isn't actually true. You could ship a banana around the world six times, and it would still have a lower carbon footprint than local beef because it takes so many resources to feed, water, and kill animals. But this idea of blood and soil, return to the land, these were Nazi slogans, and we need to remember that history and recognize this for the red flag that it is.

>> She said it, not me. She said it, not me. >> No commenting. >> [laughter] [gasps] >> And also, just one thing I

also wanted to add in, it looks like he's taken his Instagram down. I think the backlash was so bad and he was receiving so much kind of like hate. Maybe not even hate, but like criticism, let's call it that. Because I don't think anybody's saying anything that's incorrect. It's It's just heavy criticism to the point where he's actually just taken his Instagram down.

>> Are you sure he's not blocked you? >> I mean, I'm not sure, but he could have blocked me potentially. I did make a couple of I I made some reasonable comments. I didn't say anything mean. I was just like, you know, it would be interesting to me to see if he comes back with a new page or a new view or something like that. And I'm so sure that he will. Like he has a store in Wales and, you know, he wants to obviously promote this lifestyle. And like we said before, I am thankful to him for what he did for the movement. He was huge. He was one of the first recipe creators I ever like followed his recipes. Like I loved his recipes. Uh for me in the early days, they were great. So, I do wish him well, but I just wish that it could have been different.