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# The Solari Report

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OCTOBER 20, 2011

**Engaging America in a  
Real Conversation**  
with Jamie Johnson



# Engaging America in a Real Conversation

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**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** I have a hero once a week and, not surprisingly, my hero this week is Jamie Johnson. I'd like to tell you why. Nothing is more dangerous than bringing transparency to the issues of privilege in a society and not just our society, any society. For some reason, we as human beings are desperately stuck on our privileges.

We're very clear to point out other people's privileges, but it's very hard to look in the mirror and see our own. The wasp's nest that you can step in when you do is one that I personally relate to a lot, given some of the things that have happened to me when I worked in the Bush Administration and in Washington.

This conversation is particularly sensitive since the adoption of GATT and the WTO. I've encouraged you many times to watch the video of Sir James Goldsmith talking about the fundamental shift in the value of capital and labor globally - that we are engineering a fundamental shift. Some of it is new technology. Some of it is simply rebalancing globally, and of course, some of it is planned.

Much of this shift has been engineered with government and financed with government debt, and as the debt bubble slows, serious questions are emerging about whether this shift is being engineered in a way that makes fundamental economic sense, let alone the cultural and spiritual ramifications, so it's a very important question. It's going on everywhere. No matter where you live, no matter where you are, this is a dynamic that's happening and causing accelerating change. It takes a lot of courage to look at these issues, let alone to get us to open up and talk about them. Jamie did so in both of his films, and he did so with a state of amusement and a human kindness that is very special.



I was delighted that he could join us this evening. Jamie, are you with us? Welcome from the East Coast. Start us out – your first documentary, Jamie, was *Born Rich*. Start us out and tell us how the idea came about. How did it happen that you decided to make a film?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Well, the first film I made was called *Born Rich*, and that film was about ten children or young adults who were born to wealth. When I decided to make the film, I was in college at the time and I, myself, was about to inherit some family money, and I was looking around and I noticed a number of people who were in my position who had everything going for them, who had a great education and all of these opportunities to have amazing and interesting lives. Many of them were miserable and many of them didn't live interesting lives in spite of the great opportunities and privileges that they had, and I thought, "What a strange paradox. You have this group of people, this very fortunate minority who has all of this access and can make all of these choices and have the opportunities to improve their lives, and yet they don't seem to have lived successful lives." I wanted to explore that on film and the result of that was this film called *Born Rich*.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** And what did you learn making it; what did you learn that you never expected to learn?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Well, one thing I didn't fully understand was the degree to which identity is tied to wealth for people who have great deals of money, and it's something that it seems like a minor point when you're talking about wealth, but I really don't think it is. I think that the people who have money, and especially family money or money for generations, it becomes such a part of who they think they are, and they're so deeply attached to it as a sense of their own identity. They really don't build meaning in their lives in other areas, so the only thing that becomes meaningful to them is the money and in the absence of that, you look at their lives, and you see that they aren't really developed in other ways.

I think that it's why some of those stereotypes exist where you look at people born to wealth and you say, "Oh, well, there's snobbery there and there's entitlement there," and I think that largely goes back to the fact



that people stay in a very narrow framework, in a comfort zone, and that comfort zone relates to the security they have when they're around people who respond to them based on the money that they've inherited.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** One of the things that comes out early on is your curiosity on this topic. Why is there such a taboo about talking about money? My impression from watching you in *Born Rich* is you kinda don't get it. You're quizzical. Why is there such a taboo? Why is this such an uncomfortable topic for everybody? Why can't we talk about this? I want to talk about it.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** It's still a little bit unclear to me, but it's another funny point. For people that value wealth above everything else, then don't want to talk about money, is an absurd contradiction. Money is everything in their lives, yet they don't want to talk about it directly. I think in large part it has to do with the fact that if you start to talk about someone's – compare power, one person's power over another or one individual's wealth over another's, it starts to raise questions about their right to possess that wealth, and I don't think that's a conversation that many people with money want to have because I think it makes them feel vulnerable. If you start to talk about their wealth, then they feel like somehow they might have to defend it and if they have to defend it, that means that there might be an opportunity or they might be in a position to lose that wealth.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Well, I found this taboo and this discomfort everywhere in society, so in 1999, I worked in New York and then Washington, and I moved to a little farming town in Tennessee - Hickory Valley, Tennessee. About a year later one of the activist groups got the USDA database of everybody who got farming subsidies and they put it up on the internet and so you could see, by county, who got how much money over the last five years. Well, the farmers went nuts. You would've thought that you put photos of them naked up on the internet or something. It was quite funny.

**“...that comfort zone relates to the security they have when they're around people who respond to them based on the money that they've inherited.”**



I think the discomfort about talking about our money is not just among the wealthy. It's among everybody. On Wall Street, we used to have – you would have two traders sitting next to each other on the trading floor of Dillon, Read and they would share the most amazing things, including women, but they wouldn't tell each other how much each other made, ever.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Yeah, and perhaps that also relates to a sense of vulnerability. To tell somebody how much you make is, in a way, putting a value on what you do or a value on everything about you, and I think people feel nervous that they might find themselves to be less valued than others, and I don't think people want to put themselves or find themselves in that position.

You see it with politicians a lot too. Wealthy politicians, more than anyone else, seem to avoid making their wealth known publicly. I think that they feel that – it's not as though they give up that wealth. It would be very easy for them to say, "Okay, well, I'm no longer going to be rich. I'm going to disperse, or distribute, or give away all of these assets that make me wealthy," but they don't want to do that because they know that their wealth is tied to power and at the same time they don't want to be perceived as wealthy because they're worried that that might make them look undesirable as candidates somehow to voters.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** And in fact, you found one heir who you interviewed in *The One Percent* who had given away his wealth.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I did. Yeah. His name is Chuck Collins and he was an heir to the Oscar Mayer meatpacking fortune and when he was about to inherit some family money when he was a young adult. He made the decision to give all of his wealth to charities and it was a decision, as he describes in my film, that his family was troubled by it, and his father specifically didn't support the decision, but he made that choice regardless and now he's got a family. He's a middle aged man, and he stands behind the decision he made as a young adult and seems to be one of the better things, more important things he's ever done in his life.



**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** You think he's happier as a result?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** He seems to be. It seems to have been the right choice for him. He's also an activist and a writer, and he spends a lot of time advocating for a more fair economy and political policies that support the middle class. He's active. He's told me personally many times that he feels that he's much happier as a result of making that decision.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Now, you ended up in litigation because of the *Born Rich*. I guess it was while it was being filmed.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** The first film I made, yeah. One of the subjects in the film decided after being filmed that he didn't want to be included in the film and sued me over that.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** I spent 11 years in litigation and am the kind of person who will do anything to avoid litigation, so it's quite amazing that I spent time in litigation, but when I saw that, I said, "Oh, Jamie, I feel so sorry." We all have to learn this. One of my favorite scenes in *Born Rich* is when you're in the map store and you point out that there are no college courses on how to be a productive rich person. You're kind of figuring out how to invent your own world, and I thought you might want to comment on that because I thought that was a remarkable theme.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Rich people are not raised to be responsible wealth holders. I think more and more they are, and I think times have changed since I made that film. It was roughly eight years ago, and I think affluent families and family offices and even banks that cater to high net worth clients are now creating education programs and resources to help educate heirs to wealth about ways to be responsible with their family money, but at the time there was less of it. I think you definitely see the result of that. I mean you see so many people who have a lot of influence because of their family money who really don't handle that position very well and I don't want to be excessively critical, but I think the notion of kind of reckless and out of control rich kids is – there's something behind that perception. There's some truth behind it.



**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** We had Jay Hughes on the Solari Report a while back and his book, *Family Wealth*, talks about that. You've got him, I think, in one or both. I can't remember which one it is. I think it was *Born Rich*, talking about the dangers of wealth and a family going back to poverty in a couple of generations.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Yeah, Jay is an interesting guy. I interviewed him for *One Percent*, actually, but I know him through my own family's – has engaged him for help with some of the things they've been doing with their family office and also just as an author and someone who's out there in the community, speaking about this subject, and he's a really thoughtful guy. He served so many really wealthy families and seen how wealth can be problematic for people who really aren't prepared.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Well, I kept trying to get all the subscribers to read *Family Wealth* because I kept saying, "Jay, I know you wrote this for wealthy families, but I think people who would like to be wealthy can learn an awful lot from it as well," because it's a lot about building up a group – how a group of people build each other up and then really do build wealth over a long period of time.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Yeah, I think there's a lot of good and practical advice there for people who are trying to strengthen their families and build their family offices and family wealth also.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Let's go to *The One Percent*, because in *Born Rich*, you kind of talk to your family and your friends, but in *One Percent*, you really branch out and you reach out to a lot – you got a lot of great interviews but maybe you could talk about how *One Percent* came to happen. I was imagining after *Born Rich*, that you'd be struggling through all the feedback, positive and negative, and so you might be gun-shy to do another one.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I was more excited by the challenge of engaging people about talking about wealth that really didn't want to speak about it at the time and I am even now, so when I finished *Born Rich*, even though there was controversy surrounding the film and people were reluctant to



go on camera to speak about their own money, I really liked the challenge of trying to get them to talk about it and in some cases, almost forced them to talk about it. Coming off of *Born Rich – The One Percent* seemed like the next logical step in terms of filmmaking. It seemed like many things were happening politically at the time that were, in my opinion, working directly against the problem of the growing wealth gap in America, and it didn't seem like many people with wealth were addressing that problem or even willing to acknowledge it, so I thought that it was the right time to make a film about the growing wealth gap in America and to force rich people to speak to that issue.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** One of my favorite parts was the sugar moguls. I was wondering if you could describe that to the people who haven't seen it yet.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Yeah, there's a family in Florida called the Fanjul family, and they grow sugarcane in an area west of Palm Beach in the Florida Everglades. It's a very controversial business for a number of reasons because there are environmental consequences to farming sugar and there's also a price support system in place for sugar that is instituted by the government. The environmental and political issues cause a great deal of controversy for this family and it's something that I cover in the film.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** One of the reasons I really liked the sugar mogul part is I don't think the issue is wealth versus not wealth. I think the issue is, are we gonna build our wealth from doing things that make the pie bigger or are we gonna build our wealth from things that make the pie shrink? I think the sugar mogul story really brought up that issue because government money is so often – or enforcement – is so often part of engineering things that make absolutely no economic sense and they build somebody a fortune, but it can be devastating for the economy. America's always had a tradition of finding – wealth's fine if you make it

**“It seemed like many things were happening politically at the time that were, in my opinion, working directly against the problem of the growing wealth gap in America...”**



through innovation, so no, I've never heard anybody criticize Steve Jobs for being too rich. Instead, when you get rich by doing something that shrinks the pie – I think what the argument is – and so to me, the frame is not between the have and have not's. It's from the people who make money from doing something that's productive and people who make money from doing something which is overall, harmful, and I think the sugar mogul story really pops the balloon of we're making money because we're doing something useful.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Indeed. I think there are responsible ways to build wealth and irresponsible ways to build wealth and I tend to agree with you. I definitely support responsible ways to make a lot of money. In this instance, the issue you're describing with the sugar moguls without some of the price supports that are in place that were put in place by the U.S. government, the sugar industry in the U.S. really wouldn't exist and so therefore it doesn't necessarily align with the fundamental principles of capitalism, but yet people are getting rich off it. It's a tricky one.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** It came out in *Born Rich*, but it really came out in *One Percent*, and I was really glad to see it, was how much fear – many of the people I know think fear is something that we feel in the middle class or the lower class, but they don't appreciate how much fear there is all the way up into the most wealthy, and so you watch children. You explored were people worried about losing their fortunes, or getting disowned, or the fear of punishment of saying something that would be offensive, and you realized there's an awful lot of fear among the wealthy.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** A lot of fear, yes. I think people are very nervous that they might lose their place in the Byzantine order of society and I think that a lot of their social relationships reinforce their financial status and people really don't want to lose any position, financially, so there's a lot of fear in the community and many people are more desperately trying to hang on than outsiders might assume.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** But you don't feel any fear? I've watched both movies and I've never seen an ounce of fear in you.



**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I think that also a lot of people's fears stem from the fact that they're really not honest with themselves. I mean going back to the fear of speaking about money, people will tell you that it's in bad taste to talk about money or that you shouldn't talk about money, and at the same time, money means everything to them. It's just a lack of self-awareness, and it's really a resistance to big knowledge, your own personal priorities about wealth, and I think when people are willing to be more responsible in that way and are really willing to say, "Hey, this is what I care about in life and I can stand behind it," then they're not as fearful, and I don't think there's anything wrong with saying, "Money is important to me," but I do think that problems arise when people house internal contradictions.

For example, when they say, "Oh, it's impolite to talk about money. You should never talk about money," yet money means absolutely everything to them and it's all they think about all day, every day, so I feel like I'm not that fearful because I have a clear sense of what I value in my own life and what's important to me and I try and stay in touch with that.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** You have a feeling you could drop you off in the middle of Afghanistan without any money or a credit card and you'd make it back. I thought that definitely came through. Well, now we have to go to Milton Friedman, because I have to tell you that was one of my favorite parts of *The One Percent*. How in the world did you end up interviewing Milton Friedman?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I wrote Milton Friedman a letter and he responded. I received a letter back from him. I didn't anticipate that he would respond, but he did, fairly promptly, and the letter just said, "I'm out in San Francisco. Come out and if you're in the area, you can interview me." The interview ended up taking place at his apartment. I wasn't sure based on the address that he had sent me, and I coordinated with his assistant at the time, and I ended up just showing up at his apartment. He brought me right into his office and that's where we taped it.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** I was amazed. Were you amazed that he got up and walked out?



**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I was amazed at that, and it was a different time. Since the recent financial collapse, people have been reevaluating Milton Friedman's principles and some of his scholarship. It's not quite as popular to support it enthusiastically in the way it was before 2008, and so he had a different level of confidence and public perception about the free market's ability to solve all social problems was different at the time. I don't think many people that interviewed him were probably challenging him maybe in the same way that I was. He certainly got pissed, to say it frankly, and pulled off his mike and stood up and walked right out of the room. It was in his own house, so he didn't go far, but he walked away.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** I can just imagine you turning to the guy with the camera and saying, "Did you get that in the can?" That was pretty choice, and you had a lot of good interviews in *The One Percent*. I loved the fact that you had Phillips in there. I thought that was an incredible interview.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Yeah, he was great.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** You remember Kevin Phillips. He talked about the recklessness of what we were doing and you had Reich and Ralph Nader and just a lot of really rich interviews, and a lot of times when we talk about the policy issues on this, it can be pretty boring, but you kept us very – you must not have been an economics major in college.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I'm certainly not that knowledgeable in that area. I was definitely not an economics major in college, and one of the things that I was worried about and was a constant challenge while making the movie was how to make the subject come to life. It can be a boring topic to address problems with the economy and socioeconomic problems, so to try and interview people and make those interviews entertaining to a television audience was something that I was always trying to consider.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** I think one of the reasons it worked is because we're going along in your journey and you're trying to figure out why is this happening? You can't figure it out, and so the audience doesn't feel stupid because they can't figure it out either and they're wandering with



you on the journey.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** To add to that point, one of the things I found astounding was I would say to the smartest people in the world, people who are Nobel laureates, people who studied this topic and read about it and written about it for their entire lives and done so brilliantly and said, “Hey, if you were in my position, if you were extremely wealthy or in a real position to initiate change here, what would you do,” and they would say, “Well, hey, I would make a film. I’d do what you’re doing.”

And I would say, “Well, I’m already doing that. What else would you do,” and none of them had a clear answer and whether it was Robert Reich, or Milton Friedman, or Ralph Nader, or Kevin Phillips, all of them would respond and they would come up with a sweeping response that was really full of generalities and I kept saying, “Well, can you give me one first step or one clear step,” and it’s such a messy social problem, the problem of growing inequality in the country or even building wealth responsibly. It’s something that’s so confusing for people that not even these extremely brilliant figures could respond concisely and even fully coherently.

**“It’s something that’s so confusing for people that not even these extremely brilliant figures could respond concisely and even fully coherently.”**

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Well, but also they’re used to functioning at a policy level, not an entrepreneurial level, so an entrepreneur says, “Okay, you have three hours this week. You can do this, this,” and sequences it. At a policy level you talk about, okay, government changes these tax policies, so the question is – I mean the interesting thing about both *Born Rich* but even more so *One Percent*, you’re going back and forth between micro and macro, but when you talk to those guys, generally they’re used to functioning at macro, not micro. You’re saying, “Okay, what can I do at micro?”

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Well, if no one has an answer at the micro level maybe that’s a big part of the problem.



**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Right.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I certainly didn't have great solutions there. I was trying to figure it out for myself, and that was the journey of the film, but then when the smartest people around couldn't tell me anything much better that was revealing.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Well, actually I think when a lot of people start to shift their – I mean whether it's your actions, or your transactions, or your attention, we have the power to shift a huge amount of this with a personal action, and that's why I think I focus a lot on transparency, and that's why I love your films because you can't change the consciousness let alone get the action or transaction without eliminating what in the world is happening and what can we do about it? I have to read this quote. I'm sure you know it. It's right at the end when you were talking about your dad and you said – it's wonderful.

Your dad was talking about it's not possible to change the world, only to touch a few lives, and you said, "But if you're always hiding from the problem, you're never gonna find any solutions," so I do think there's an incredible amount that every individual can do simply – but that starts by kind of – because the more of us who do it together, the better. I have a friend who ran for governor in Tennessee. He said, "You think the snowflake is powerless unless you realize enough of them can get together and they can shut down New York City," so micro action to me is powerful. I wanted to ask you, have you ever seen the movie, *Syriana*, that George Clooney made about the Middle East?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I have. I did see when it first came out.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Okay, because every time I would see your dad get upset with you, which is a couple of times, I would think of the Middle Eastern prince who turned to Matt Damon, who was playing the investment banker from Switzerland, and screams at him, "As long as I spend lots of money and live a wonderful and luxurious life, I'm fine, but if I start to invest money locally to build up the strength of my people, I'll offend the powers that be." What he was saying, one of the



expressions that I use – do you know what the third rail is in the subway system?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I don't.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** There are two tracks. The train runs on the two tracks and then the third – there's a little gizmo that flaps over onto this third rail, and that's where the power was, and so what's funny is we have this – I call it the central banking warfare model but we have this economic model and it's very centralized and it's very controlled, and no one from the very poor to the very wealthy feels free to touch the third rail and reengineer it for fear that they're gonna offend, so here you have this guy, that Matt Damon is the investment banker that's very wealthy and very powerful, but what he's saying is, "I have to function within the model," and so when I saw your dad get frustrated because he's dealing with the – he understands the dangers of touching the third rail.

That's when I looked at you and I said, "This guy's fearless. This is fabulous," but the question is we're all afraid and I do think there are real dangers because people – there have been many people who have tried to touch the third rail, including very wealthy people, and they regret doing it. It was very dangerous, and including they lost their lives, so I always wanted to ask you whether you'd watched *Syriana* or not and whether you related to it at all.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I'll have to watch it again with that comparison in mind and I think it's a good point. My father, in his own life, I think, when he did resist certain authorities and challenged the establishment, for lack of a better way of describing it – I think when he was a younger man, he was criticized for it and he mentions that to me in the film, *The One Percent*, and he says exactly what you are reiterating. If I make those kinds of decisions in life and I try and initiate change that could backfire for a number of people, and people would be very angry with me for it.

I can appreciate that. It's very easy for me to appreciate that. For one, because I obviously love my father, and I can kind of see the truth in the statement, and also I feel like he, in his own indirect way, is supportive



of my efforts and I think he feels that on some level it's interesting that I am able to take certain risks that didn't always work out for him when he was a young man.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** One of the things that comes out tremendously is you just see all – it's just written all over his face how much he loves you and how proud he is of you. That's one of the things I think that makes the film so human and so touching that you would share that with us.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Yeah, it seems to –

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** So it's quite wonderful. You published *The One Percent*, in 2007 or 2008?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Well, I actually had screened the film at a film festival in 2006, and then HBO purchased the film and asked me to reedit some things and they ultimately aired it for the first time in early 2008.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** So it came out before the big drop in the markets and the bailouts or –

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** It did, yes.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** – right at the same time? So your timing was extraordinary.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** It was definitely – I think probably more people would have seen the film, obviously, had the film come out after everything had happened, and when the film came out, conservatives really weren't willing to say yet that the market can't solve all of society's problems if you just – with less regulation, everything's gonna work out fine. I feel like there are very, very few people who are saying that today. Even conservatives are saying, "Well, of course, yes, you need oversight," and that's really not exactly – that wasn't a – it was very popular to say that any oversight at all was a horrible idea before the financial collapse. That's something that has changed a lot.



**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** It's a very different perspective watching it today than it would've been then. Now, what was your feedback on *The One Percent*? For the year following that, what was the feedback to you?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** And interestingly, to answer that question, many people would say one of their biggest problems with the film was, well, nothing's going to happen. You're creating a sense of urgency with this film but there's really no sense that there's any protests out there in society. There's no unrest over this issue. Yeah, maybe they ran a series on inequality in the *New York Times*, but that's hardly a real conflict over this issue, and now you're seeing – with Occupy Wall Street, you're seeing something happen that everyone thought would never occur.

**“You’re creating a sense of urgency with this film but there’s really no sense that there’s any protests out there in society. There’s no unrest over this issue.”**

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** We have questions coming in on the webinar. Let me just ask you one. “I think Occupy Wall Street is proof that American, indeed the world is having the conversation about inequality, but that conversation is not and never will be between the have and the have not's. This country needs jobs, not ones that pay minimum wages, but they seem to be where the one percent want to take us. That's where they sent the jobs in search of more short term profits for lining executive pockets.

You and Buffett should team up to try and change their minds. Ours are already decided in favor of change and we have no power within the current system to effect change. We have taxation without representation with Congress, of course, and the entire monetary and military's security structures controlled by the top one percent. Just exactly what are we supposed to do to start change, to change the system to make it more fair to those in the bottom 99 percent, by growing our own food? I feel the situation is hopeless.” Got a response?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Well, it certainly – yes, it's a discouraging moment in history. At the same time, my outlook isn't as bleak, my personal take on



the situation, but yeah, I think there are – you just referenced many things, but I think people have a right to be pissed off about what’s happening in the country right now, and I think they are, and I think Occupy Wall Street is a real example of that and now that dissatisfaction has a voice. It may not be as concise or as clear as it could be, but certainly you’re seeing frustration.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Have you been to, or watched, or seen any of the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I’ve been down there, yes. I’ve been down to the center of the movement and the protests and to me it looked like huge groups of people. It looked like there were some highly motivated community activists there and it looked like there were other people who were hanging out and on the periphery of the activism but enjoying the momentum of crowds gathering in the spirit of the movement but perhaps weren’t so engaged in actually, really, an agenda of any kind.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** We have another comment. Somebody says, “That’s funny. I’m always scared to talk about my little financial wealth out of fear of somebody taking it.” Okay, so here’s the thing. I know you must get a lot of pressure and I hate to pressure you, but I think you have an incredible gift. Are there films in the future?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** There are films in the future. Sure, there are. Are there going to be more films about wealth and inequality? I mean I’m sure there will be. On some level, it’s very hard for me not to think about the topic.

At the same time, I started working on a documentary that’s about something very different. It relates to wealth, but it’s really about the declining influence of the Protestant establishment, so I wouldn’t say that it has anything to do with what’s happening with Occupy Wall Street, or the protests, or the growing wealth gap. It’s really about a shift in power within the upper class and how that’s changed over the last two or three generations in this country.



**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Well, I think you have a fearless gift of taking the long view and asking great questions. Do you know what a trim tab is?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I don't.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** It's both on an airplane and an aircraft carrier or a big ship. On a really big ship, the way you turn the rudder is the rudder has a rudder called the trim tab, and when I was in Washington we did a lot of government reengineering. We used to say there's two ways to turn an aircraft carrier. You can talk to the captain or you can just put on a wetsuit, go down, and start blowing bubbles on the trim tab. When I watched *Born Rich* and *The One Percent*, you have a way of getting in a situation and getting some perspective on it. You can see it top down and go right for the trim tab.

What's the thing we can change here that could shift this? You have a way of going at it, and I think that's a gift that can apply to anything you'd be interested in, whether it has to do with wealth – or it has to do with the relationship between people. I think that my take, watching your films – because I'm a person who's had a lot of experience at all levels of society. I've been rich. I've been poor.

I just have a very wide scope, and I think the things you're talking about just cross cut very, very broadly, not just in America but globally, so it's a very human discussion and debate that has very wide ranging ramifications. Now, the important thing for everybody listening to this is, as you can tell, I'm trying to get them to watch *Born Rich* and *The One Percent*. How do we stay in touch with you and your work? If we want to follow Jamie Johnson, how do we do it?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Well, certainly films are out there that are accessible through Netflix and Hulu and other easily accessible platforms on the internet. You can watch them right on your computer if you have access to Netflix. I think for now, that's certainly the easiest way to see those films and in the future, I'd say they'll probably be in the very same places over the years. I can't be 100 percent sure, but I would imagine.



**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** And you blogged on *Vanity Fair*?

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** I did. I wrote a weekly column for *Vanity Fair* for a few years and that was a blast and now actually looking forward to writing some more long form stories for different publications, so actually trying to go a little deeper with some of the writing and reporting I've been doing on the topic, so that's another case where we might have some stuff coming out.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Okay, when you start to publish, put me on your list, because I would love to republish your stuff and point people to it from the blog.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Great. Thank you.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Jamie, I just really want to thank you. I think your work has made an incredible contribution and has certainly given me an enormous amount of delight. I want to thank you for taking the time to join us on the Solari Report, and you just have a wonderful evening.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** Yeah. Thank you so much, and let me just say that many people in your position aren't as receptive to these ideas as you are, so I really appreciate it, that you took the time and found something interesting about the material. Thank you so much.

**C. AUSTIN FITTS:** Have a great night.

**JAMIE JOHNSON:** You too.

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