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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Coming Up; Preparing for the Next Big Pandemic]

TONY DOKOUPIL: Coming up, the Covid pandemic seemingly in the rear view mirror. There's a new book, though, that warns it might have only been the beginning. We'll talk to the author of *The Big One* and find out what we can learn from the past to help us in the future. Stay with us.

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9:45:23 a.m.

4 minutes and 36 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Preparing for the Next Big Pandemic]

DOKOUPIL: More than five years after the start of the Covid pandemic, one of the nation's leading disease experts is issuing a new and urgent warning the next crisis could be worse. In his new book, *The Big One: How We Must Prepare for Future Deadly Pandemics*, Dr. Michael Osterholm imagines the impact of a virus seven times as deadly as Covid-19. Dr. Osterholm joins us, along with CBS News medical contributor Dr. Celine Gounder, who serves on President Biden — who served, rather, on President Biden's Covid-19 Advisory Board. She's also editor at large for public health at KFF Health News. Glad to have you both here. You're coming back — you're here in the 8:00 hour as well, and you're going to have some questions. You're going to join, help us ask better questions here. But first, the likelihood of a terrible pandemic. Dr. Osterholm, you say it's very likely really very.

DR. MICHAEL OSTERHOLM: Well, the pandemic clock is ticking. We know that there will be additional pandemics and some might be milder than Covid. Some may be the same, but clearly the potential for some to be much worse than Covid is very real and we have to prepare for that.

DOKOUPIL: So you would think this is game two of the season? We just had one five minutes ago. You know, like in — does that not make us more ready, not less?

OSTERHOLM: We are much less ready today and for the following reason — one, we are completely ignoring the lessons that could have and should have been learned from the past pandemic. And that's what we kind of concentrate on in this book, is saying we needed a 9/11-like Commission following the pandemic to say what went right, what went wrong, how could we make it better? What do we need to prevent a future pandemic from taking over the world? And we haven't done that. And really, this book was an attempt to just be honest, you know, unvarnished, this is what we learned, we should have learned, we didn't learn, what are we going to do about it.

ADRIANA DIAZ: Dr. Gounder, I'll let you jump in because I know you have some questions too.

DR. CELINE GOUNDER: Yeah. So, Mike, we know that public health is our front line defense against the next big one. We're seeing this massive meltdown now at the CDC. The director has been fired. Multiple leaders have resigned. There's a real crisis of confidence also in the CDC with critics like Secretary Kennedy saying the CDC has lost credibility. How do you think the agency can realistically win back the public's trust?

OSTERHOLM: First of all, we have to recognize we're in freefall. I've never known a time in my 50 years in public health like this. Where — where is the leadership that can take on the mis and disinformation? Right now, we have two forces out there working against each other. One is science that has brought us all the benefits of increased life expectancy because of reductions of illness over the last 50 years and then we have magic — smoke and mirrors, and those two are in competition right now. And what Mr. Kennedy represents is the magic smoke and mirrors and that is misinformation that is making the public think that he's helping, when in fact he is actually causing great harm. And not just for now, but as we talk about the pandemic preparedness, as you so well know, one of the most important things we need are better vaccines for these future pandemics. He ceased all the funding for this critical initiative to do that. So it is an issue. I don't know what it's going to take to change this dynamic, but I can tell you the world has to understand and specific to the U.S., this is about literally science versus magic.

GOUNDER: Now there is, to — to your point, there's a growing concern that science is taking a backseat to politics and some people actually think science is an ideology itself. What needs to happen for people to understand the scientific process and for that scientific process to remain politically independent?

OSTERHOLM: Well, first of all, let me make it very clear the public will understand the impact of this, because we're going to see more disease. We're going to see more people dying needlessly. We're going to see outbreaks that don't get detected early because we don't have a public health system in place. We're going to see vaccines that have saved so many lives for so many decades. Suddenly not available, that will begin to play quickly in the public. They'll see that it's going to be a direct impact issue. I hope it doesn't take that to get to this point where we understand the importance of science, the fact that science, by the way, is not truth. Science is the pursuit of truth. We have to keep reinforcing that message that this is what we're all about is trying to find what are the things that will save lives, make people's lives better. And right now, we're challenged.

DIAZ: If there was one thing, we're almost out of time, but if you can just give us like one word, if there's one thing to change, to prepare ourselves for the next big one, what is that?

OSTERHOLM: We need better vaccines, and we can get them. This is not impossible. We can get them all.

DOKOUPIL: I appreciate that a note of hope to end on. Dr. Michael Osterholm, appreciate it and

Dr. Gounder, always appreciate you as well. *The Big One* — it's on sale right now.