



## **NATIONAL AGENDA 2019: DIRECTION DEMOCRACY**

### **TARA SETMAYER**

#### **“Speaking from the Right”**

#### **HOSTED BY**

Center for Political Communication,  
with support from the Office of the Provost  
and the College of Arts and Sciences,  
University of Delaware

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commentator during the 2016 presidential election  
cycle. Vulture.com recognized her as one of 2016's  
"Top 20 Election Coverage Stars."

Transcript of Event

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[MUSIC OPEN]

ANNOUNCER: Please welcome your host for this evening, Dr. Lindsay Hoffman.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Good evening everyone. Thank you so much for being here. Ah, this is our ninth annual National Agenda Speaker Series brought to you by the University of Delaware's Center for Political Communication and with support from the Office of the Provost and the great support from the College of Arts and Sciences. Our theme this year, as you saw, is "Direction Democracy" – we're looking at where we've been, where we're going, ah, where we're at in this current, ah, democracy. The CPC is a nonpartisan organization and we feature speakers across the spectrum. So, you can find podcasts, transcripts, ah, videos, and our complete lineup at [cpc.udel.edu](http://cpc.udel.edu). I'd like to remind our audience that our goal here is to engage in civil dialogue and not to have disagreements or disagreeable disagreements, so let's agree to be candid but also courteous of other's views. We will have an audience Q and A at the end of the talk and you can literally toss your questions to us using the Catchbox which is a little microphone box that our, my, my some of my students will be tossing around for you to ask questions. So tonight, Tara Setmayer, Setmayer is a CNN political commentator, contributor to ABC News, and former GOP communications director on Capitol Hill. She's appeared on ABC's "The View"; ABC's "Good Morning America"; HBO's "Real Time with Bill Maher"; she has a podcast. Basically, she's everywhere. And, she's a self-avowed Republican Never Trumper. Let's find out more about the state of the GOP, the Republican Party in the Trump era. Please give a big Blue Hen welcome to Tara Setmayer.

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AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you for being here.

TARA SETMAYER: Thank you so much for having me.

DR. HOFFMAN: And you're wearing blue. [Chuckle.]

TARA SETMAYER: Yes. Well –

DR. HOFFMAN: University of Delaware blue.

TARA SETMAYER: I try. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, I would like to start with a video from election night 2016 or, I'm sorry, 2018.

TARA SETMAYER: Um.

DR. HOFFMAN: You made some predictions about what was to come. So, I'm going to start that now.

TARA SETMAYER: Oh-oh.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle.]

VIDEO:

DAN HARRIS: We're up here in the skybox continuing our coverage on ABC News live. I'm Dan Harris. Uh, lets step outside of the skybox and talk to Tara Setmayer for a second. Tara is one of our ABC News contributors and she's also a former, ah, Republican staffer in Congress. Let's talk about the big breaking news. So, the Democrats are going to take control, ah, of, of the House. This is clearly a big victory for the Democrats, however, is there a risk that they would overplay their hands and overly investigate this President or push for impeachment in a way that would alienate voters?

TARA SETMAYER: Well, I think that that was the concern of the Democratic

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leadership initially that's why they didn't want Democrats running on impeachment and running on, ah, you know, taking President Trump out. They wanted to run on healthcare and the economy, taxes – issues that matter to everyday people. However, um, I was in Congress as a staffer when the Republicans lost the House in 2006 and then when we got it back in 2010 and it's, its difficult to rein it in once you have the power of subpoenas. Um, you have to understand that when, when you take over the Congress the chairmen of these, of these committees have the ability to subpoena whatever information they want.

VIDEO END

TARA SETMAYER: Oh, somebody hire her.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, soothsayer, predictor of the future, this is essentially how things have played out. Should we have expected this outcome that we're in today all along?

TARA SETMAYER: You know, I think it was inevitable. Um, given this president's behavior there was no way the Democrats were going to allow him to get away with it for too long. Um, I mean, Donald Trump is his own worst enemy despite how he points the finger at everyone else. It's really, all of this is self-inflicted. So, I mean, if he were actually governing and not doing things that warranted subpoenas and impeachment inquiries then it would be a little bit more difficult to justify it. I can tell you that Republicans, when I worked on Capitol Hill, they issued over a hundred subpoenas to the Obama Administration and it was

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about, over things that way less egregious than what we're dealing with now. So, ah, it's not necessarily, I'm not happy that I was right.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Um, I've never [chuckle] wanted to be more wrong. I say the same thing about Donald Trump that I said I hope that he can step up when he got elected. I mean, I didn't vote for him, but, I'm like, well, we've got him now so I hope that he can step up and rise to the occasion because if I'm right about everything that I was warning about during the election then it was bad for America. I'd never wanted to be more wrong and I, I still, um, I can, I continue to be right about this and [chuckle] I, I, I don't want to be. I, I, I really don't want to be.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, ah, if, if you've been paying attention to the news, and I, I'm assuming those people in this audience have, um, what I really admire –

TARA SETMAYER: Slow news day today.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yes. Slow news day.

TARA SETMAYER: [Chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Ah, what I really admire about your podcast and the way you approach things is you, you draw on a lot of facts and you really break it down as to what's happening. So, I'm wondering if you could walk us through what you see as the most likely path forward on this impeachment story. You've done the research. I've listened to the podcast.

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.] Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Can you give us a "Cliff Notes" version – I don't know if "Cliff Notes" is still around – "Cliff Notes" Version of how we –

TARA SETMAYER: I think so.

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DR. HOFFMAN: – how we got here – we’re from the ‘90’s.

TARA SETMAYER: I, I, I know.

DR. HOFFMAN: How we got here –

TARA SETMAYER: – it’s –

DR. HOFFMAN: – yeah, how we got here and where we’re going. What’s like the brief version of how this happened?

TARA SETMAYER: Well, which here? Are we talking about impeachment?

[Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Impeachment.

TARA SETMAYER: Okay.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yes.

TARA SETMAYER: Um, [sigh], well, to Nancy Pelosi’s credit, she was very, very reluctant to get to this point much to the chagrin of a lot of folks in her caucus. And, I, you know, Nancy Pelosi has been around a long time and even though, um, I’ve fought against her for many years, ah, as part of the Republican establishment because we, you know, disagreed on different policy issues, um, but, the way she’s been handling things her experience has really come into play. And it’s not easy. When you’re in Congress it’s like herding cats. Being Speaker of the House is not an easy job, but she’d done it before, so she was familiar with kind of what do. And you had some rabble-rousers in there, you know, the new freshmen that came in that kind of wanted to just go full steam ahead and like impeach Donald Trump the next day and she was like wait, hold on, hold on, hold on. Um, so she was at least very, um, methodical about the decision. Obviously a lot of people were hanging their hats on the Mueller Report and, um, and if anyone is – has anyone here actually read the Mueller Report; it’s okay if you

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haven't. Like –

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh –

TARA SETMAYER: – a couple?

DR. HOFFMAN: – like three hands.

TARA SETMAYER: A couple.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: All the way through? Anyone who just read the summary even? Okay. Thank God.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TARA SETMAYER: That makes me feel a little better.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle.]

TARA SETMAYER: I don't blame you. The summary is enough to be honest with you. But, um, because if you start to read the full report, especially Volume 1 – I mean Volume 2 is all about obstruction and Trump's behavior in the White House and trying to stop, shutdown the, the, ah, the investigation – but Volume 1 is horrifying. It reads like a spy novel. And, if you really see the detail that the, into the Russian's operation attacking our elections and you see how open the Trump campaign was to receiving that help, it's quite alarming and unacceptable. This idea of no collusion, no obstruction is BS. That's not true. Collusion first of all is not a legal term. Um, there was a lot of colludey (sic) stuff going on there [laughter.] Okay –

DR. HOFFMAN: Colludey (sic).

TARA SETMAYER: – with the, with the Trump folks and the Russians from Paul Manafort to, to the Trump Tower meeting. I mean, there was a lot. Roger Stone, Wikileaks, all, I mean, it, there was a lot going on. Um, but, it was hard for

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everybody to understand, right? There were so many moving parts. You've got Russian oligarchs with like five syllable names that no one can pronounce and then you have, you know, that Donald Trump said this to this person to that person and, I mean, there was a lot in there. And it was 448 pages. You see how many in here read it. People have lives. I don't blame you for not reading it. It was a lot for me to read. Um, so, it made it hard to sell to the American people that this was worthy of impeachment even though it really was. So, they kind of said, "shoot we, well, this isn't going to work." And, um, and then Bob Mueller came to testify. That was a disaster. Did anybody watch the Mueller hearings?

AUDIENCE: Yes.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah. It was; I was like, what is wrong with this dude? Give him some, like, ginger or vitamin B, give him a vitamin B shot or something.

What happened to this guy?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: So, it was, you know, obviously Mueller had lost a step and, um, and, you know, he's a former Marine, he's one of the most honorable lawmen in this country, public servants. But, it was clear he didn't want to be there. And, it was clear that he was not going to give his opinion on anything. Nothing. And it was very frustrating because if Robert Mueller had just come out and said, look, because of this OLC memo we cannot indict a sitting President. However, if it weren't for this memo, he'd be indicted ten times over. If he would have just said that I think it would have changed the calculus for a lot of people. But he didn't. So, he left it up to us to figure it out. Well, you know, that's not going to work. So, the, so the Democrats had to say, well, it's not going to be the Mueller Report, so I guess we're going to have to just focus on actually beating

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him at the ballot box. And then, the whistleblower. This is something that is very easy for average people who don't live, breathe and eat this stuff like I do to understand. People that have real lives outside of Washington, it's easy for them to watch the news or pick up a newspaper and see the President of the United States asked a foreign government to help him for, ask for a favor to help him against a political opponent. Oh, and by the way, we had all of this military aid we were going to give you that we didn't because we were waiting to see whether you were going to do me this favor. That's easy to understand. There's a couple of Russian oligarch names with five syllables in this too but they are ancillary. [Chuckle.]

AUDIENCE: [Chuckles.]

TARA SETMAYER: Um, so, to get to this point, I think, Nancy Pelosi, they can't say that they rushed into it, you can't say that she did this, you know, she was eager to do it. She knows that an impeachment inquiry is very divisive for the country. We were divided already. So, um, I hope they don't play, overplay their hand like I said earlier because it gets easy, very easy to do that when you have the gavel and subpoena power. But so far, other than Adam Schiff making a really stupid mistake by parodying Trump's, the transcripts from Trump's call with the Ukrainian Prime Minister, um, other than that Adam Schiff has done an excellent job I think so far prosecuting the case.

DR. HOFFMAN: What do you think –

TARA SETMAYER: Very different than Jerry Nadler on the Judiciary Committee.

DR. HOFFMAN: What do you think he did that was so stupid?

TARA SETMAYER: Well, the transcripts, they, they speak for themselves. He didn't need to, so I don't know if you guys are familiar with what I'm talking about.

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But, Adam Schiff last week –

DR. HOFFMAN: We're definitely in the weeds.

TARA SETMAYER: Okay, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: So, last week everyone knows that an impeachment inquiry was opened up; we found out that there was a whistleblower complaint and we saw the complaint, we saw the release of the transcript between the President and the Ukrainian President where he's asking for this favor, and then the acting director of National Intelligence had to testify because he did not hand the whistleblower complaint over to Congress which is what the law says you're supposed to do. And so, he needed to explain why. And during the Intelligence Committee hearing when he was explaining why, um, the Chairman gets to do an opening statement. And Adam Schiff, who's the Chairman of the Intelligence Committee, gave the opening statement and summarized the President's call with the Ukrainian President. And he didn't read it word for word. He kind of did a dramatic reading.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle.]

TARA SETMAYER: And, um, Trump and his, and his folks zeroed in on that and, and apparently this, a dramatic reading means you committed treason and should be executed, um, which is what Trump has been calling for because Adam Schiff read it in colloquial terms. And it made it sound like, like a mafia boss.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: And it was kind of like something out of a, you know, out of a Soprano's episode.

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DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TARA SETMAYER: And, people knew that it was a, a parody, you know, a summary but Trump and his people have jumped all over it and it just gave them an unnecessary kind of bone to distract from the content of what was really going on. Because the content of the call is pretty damning. So, I say all of that to say that now that we are in an official impeachment inquiry, um, that just means it's the investigation part and then House has to vote on the actual article, they have to draw up Articles of Impeachment and then vote on it and then it goes to the Senate. But, um, that's kind of how we got here. I mean, you know, Donald Trump has been very lawless, and it finally caught up to him.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I know we're all interested in the impeachment inquiry and –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – it feels like I'm kind of like wondering what's happening just since we've started this conversation.

TARA SETMAYER: Oh, my God, what's happened just since I spoke to your class earlier?

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: I mean, it's, its out of like firehose pace.

DR. HOFFMAN: Right. It is. But I do want to talk about, um, I found an article that you, ah, or sort of that you were interviewed by NPR about a proposal offered by the Federal Education Department that would allow students to circle as many racial categories as they want. This is –

TARA SETMAYER: Oh my God, how old is this?

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DR. HOFFMAN: – 2006.

TARA SETMAYER: Wow. That's a long time ago. Okay.

DR. HOFFMAN: But, I think it's really important as we're approaching the 2020 census –

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – and people are thinking about, um, ah, how to ask people about their racial identities. Um, you come from a biracial, multiracial background. Um, I do want to say that as a result of those discussions, ah, in 2007 they did in fact provide the following recommendations for ethnicity and race. So, they asked what is a person's ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino, or not Hispanic or Latino. Um, this was revolutionary back in 2006-2007.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah, they still don't have a box for me.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: How does this impact students from multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds and how meaningful is it to label yourself in more than one of these categories?

TARA SETMAYER: Well, I, let's see, I think, um, this has been something that I've lived with my whole life because there is no box for me. I'm an "other." And I like being an "other." I don't mind it. Um, it's, ah, you know, being different is cool and I embrace that. But the "other" thing started, I didn't really realize I was an "other" until I had to take standardized tests because you had to check a box. And so, I started taking the PSAT's and things like that and I, I remember there was like four categories and I'm like, ah, excuse me Proctor,

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like, I'm none of these, what do I check? And she was like, I guess "other". And then from that point on, I was like oh, okay, well I'm an "other." That's kind of cool. Um, but then as, obviously this was a long time ago. I'm 44 now so we're talking, you know, 25 years ago, early '90's. And, but you see how the demographics have changed in this country. And you see more and more, even just with marketing, you see more and more biracial couples, and, you know, on television and in movies. Like, the, the demographics are changing. It's more accepted to be, um, you know, what the traditional labels of people are don't, are changing. Um, I've never been one that's big on identity politics. That's kind of part of my conservatism worldview on things. I don't like the necessary labels. Um, you'll never hear me call myself an African American because I'm not that. That's not my ethnicity. But I am a woman of color. So, you know, but I'm an American first. You know, like, it's one of those things where I, I've never been one that's really subscribed to the whole racial identity thing very much, um, because I think that sometimes that just makes us look at each other in ways – we have preconceived notions and different things and why do we have to have those labels. But obviously for practical purposes, for census and things like that you need to have it. But, I don't like the idea of certain quotas and racial things like that because then people look at you sideways and think, well, are you just here because we needed to fill someone that's, that's an "other" on a box? And I don't want anyone to ever second guess what my, the merit of me being where I am. And I think that should apply to anybody.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. Well, we can't talk about the census without talking about citizenship.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

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DR. HOFFMAN: Um, of course, the census will not be including a citizenship question on the 2020 version, but tell us why you think the Trump Administration was so hellbent –

TARA SETMAYER: [Chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – on getting that question on there? Um, I, I mean, he seems – I'm a political scientist and a communications scholar; I'm obsessed with question wording and –

TARA SETMAYER: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – and surveys – he seems more obsessed with it than even someone like I am. Like, that's my job. So, what, what is it, why was he so hellbent on this?

TARA SETMAYER: Well, I could say, I could go the easy way and just say he's a racist but he's, um, [chuckle], a bigot for sure. And –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: – I mean, Archie Bunker-in-Chief –

DR. HOFFMAN: Don't parse words.

TARA SETMAYER: – is what I call him. No. Can't do it. I'm from Jersey.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: It's in my DNA. I –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – I'm a straight shooter. Um, I think that there is; you know, he, he comes from a certain generation where people are, he looks at people in categories. You know? He's very Archie Bunker-like. And, the idea of him getting elected and the whole immigration stuff was a large part of why a lot of

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people voted for him. They felt that, you know, there was an invasion, this, as Chris Cuomo, my colleague says, the brown menace is coming and, um, and Trump knows where, who, who, you know, who supports him. He knows who his base is. And this is part of that tough, we're going to keep America, you know, make America great again, make America white again, or however he wanted to define that. And having that question on there was like well why the hell not. Why can't we do this? You know? These people aren't supposed to be here in the first place, then we need to know who is a citizen and who isn't, and his base is like, yeah. And, that's all it's about. It has nothing to do with anything more thoughtful. There was no, like, you know, the, the legal reasoning behind it was shot down by Judges as being legally dubious, um, which tells you all you need to know. I mean, the government has a lot of smart lawyers and –

DR. HOFFMAN: Well –

TARA SETMAYER: – they, they, you know, the fact that they couldn't come up with a good legal reason shows you there wasn't one. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, the last time I checked, the Trump Administration has agreed to pay more than almost seven million dollars in legal fees –

TARA SETMAYER: Yep.

DR. HOFFMAN: – ah, so far, for [indiscernible] –

TARA SETMAYER: Taxpayer money.

DR. HOFFMAN: – sued over the government's failed attempt to add citizenship to the question to the 2020 census. Do you think that will affect Republican support for the President?

TARA SETMAYER: No. No. Because it's, it's not even about that anymore, unfortunately. It's really all, um, you know, he'll, he'll, he'll spin it as it's the Deep

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State; its everybody else's fault; everyone's out to get me; ah, we tried but there's Deep State people that should be brought up on treason charges in the Census Department that stopped it. I mean, he'll come up with every kind of reason and his base will go, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well –

TARA SETMAYER: So, I don't think it, it's not going to make a difference.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well –

TARA SETMAYER: There's so many other more important problems, really.

DR. HOFFMAN: Tell us about this Deep State argument. I mean –

TARA SETMAYER: Well –

DR. HOFFMAN: – from a lot of, ah, student's perspectives at the University of Delaware we tend –

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – to have a more of a liberal Democratic population, they want to understand what is this argument from the Trump Administration?

TARA SETMAYER: So, this – how many people in here know who Alex Jones is? Okay. So, then you guys should know [chuckle] all about the Deep State. Alex Jones has been screaming this for years and, and basically it's a conspiracy theory that there are people embedded in the government that are there to, um, sabotage, ah, the person that they don't want. So, Trump is now the person. Like the Deep State has been around, lurking around for a while kind of like very Manchurian Candidate and but now Donald Trump is the person in power and those folks don't like him because he's, he's not, you know, he's not a politician and he's anti-establishment so we're going to take him down. So, that's basic, that's the, that's the easy version of the Deep State. It's people who are

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government, long-time government employees mostly in the, you know, the intel community, um, in the FBI, law enforcement folks skulking around looking to, I guess, form the coup. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, that's, one thing I found as I've been listening to your podcast, and I'm going to bring up a picture of your podcast later –

TARA SETMAYER: Oh, my God. That's great.

DR. HOFFMAN: But, um –

TARA SETMAYER: It's "Honestly Speaking with Tara", by the way –

DR. HOFFMAN: And we'll bring it back up.

TARA SETMAYER: – if you guys want to – everywhere podcasts are found.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: That's one thing I really enjoy about listening to you is that you, you are, you're like an explainer. You're like a one-woman explainer about all of these kinds of –

TARA SETMAYER: My mom calls me Tara-pedia.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.] She just laughs, she just goes like, you're Tara-pedia.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, well, let me bring –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – up your, ah, Twitter profile. You obviously have a lot of profiles. Um, or, I'm sorry, a lot of followers. And, my concern is that you probably receive a fair amount of hate –

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TARA SETMAYER: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – on Twitter and other social media. How do you, ah, manage kind of [chuckle] this connect between, ah, having a personal profile and expressing your views? I know you're a huge sports fan.

TARA SETMAYER: Indeed.

DR. HOFFMAN: Apparently a New York Giants –

TARA SETMAYER: The clue is I wear Giants blue.

DR. HOFFMAN: – fan. [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.] Sorry to all my Dem friends but it's actually Giants blue.

DR. HOFFMAN: But, or Delaware –

TARA SETMAYER: Or Delaware blue, yes.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: But, how do you manage a personal presence online as well as this, ah, political presence on a day to day basis with potentially people who are very critical of you?

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah, well, when you're a minority female conservative you learn to let criticism [chuckle] roll of your back very early on. I've been called every name in the book that you could possibly imagine. I've been called Uncle Tom. I've been called a Aunt Jemima. I've been called the "N" word. I've been called a sell-out. I've been called everything. Um, so, you know, from the time I was young my mom, my mom is very influential in my life. My mom is really tough. I come from a long line of tough Setmayer women and, um, I've just, I learned very early on to just be like whatever. I let that roll of my back. In the political world, politics "ain't bean bag." I've sure you've heard that expression.

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And it's true. It is a bruising, bruising career and its male dominated anyway. Just take out the, the, the politics of it. Just as a woman in politics, just like law enforcement, you, you're going to, you're always going to have to be twice as good. Whether that's fair or not, that's the way it is. So, you have to have thick skin. Um, I also attribute, like I said I'm a Jersey girl, I attribute growing up 15 minutes outside of New York City to a single mom in a blue-collar environment in Bergen County to shaping who I am and how I handle adversity. Politics online now is a whole new thing. Um, when I was younger when I first started off in politics when I was 18 you didn't have Twitter. We didn't have social media. So, it was really just like arguments on campus, or, you know, um, when I worked on Capitol Hill and I was, I mean, I was entrenched in politics from the time I was 18 because I went to George Washington University. So, I was right there in the middle of it all on purpose, in D.C. You learn to, you kind of didn't really get it as much. It was just kind of in like cocktail parties or like if we hung out with my Democratic friends and we would get into arguments over like, I don't know, a policy on something, but it was never really like that bad. Fast forward to the age of social media. Um, the death threats that I got during the 2016 election campaign because I was not pro-Trump were so severe the FBI got involved. And, CNN would provide armed security escorts for me in and out of the studio in New York City. I was based back, ah, in, in New York at the time. I'm now back in D.C. But, ah, yeah, so I would never post when I would be on air until I was already in studio. Um, we had multiple conversations with local police, with the FBI field office in New York anytime that I would get death threats. Clearly it didn't work.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

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AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Clearly I was undeterred.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Um, my mom was a little more unnerved than I was but, um, because my husband's a federal law enforcement officer so I like to have my own personal protection detail anyway,

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: So, I wasn't really worried. And, I kind of felt like, hey, you know, anything worth fighting for you have to make a decision that sometimes you put your life at risk. And I was prepared for that. But, um, it was ah, it's unlike anything I'd ever experienced before. So, you just have to, you have to just put things in perspective, you know. Some people are like their whole lives are, oh my God, how many followers do I have, what's happening, how many likes on Instagram and, you can't live your life like that because it, it will ruin you. It will ruin you. Have, you have to have balance, you have to have, find other things – like I like live music and sports. I find a way to decompress and just kind of let the, the “Google Machine” – as my old Congressman I used to work for used to say, you got to put the “Google Machine” down every once in a while.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Um, I obviously can't because of what I do [chuckle]; its everywhere with me, ah, because this, everything is so fast paced nowadays that, I mean, by the time we're done tonight –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TARA SETMAYER: – I guarantee there were two more headlines that, of things that developed after today. Um –

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DR. HOFFMAN: I'm already anxious about that.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah, I, I –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: I'm like I might sneak a peek like while we're here.

DR. HOFFMAN: No, no, no.

TARA SETMAYER: No.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: I'm only kidding. Um, but, ah, yeah, you just, I just, I mean not everybody, everybody handles conflict differently and for me I just kind of – I don't engage trolls because its just not worth it. And what's, now that we know that a lot of this was Russian bots, like I wonder how many of the death threats I got were actual people –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um.

TARA SETMAYER: – um, because the FBI couldn't trace some of them and I wonder now that we know what we know with the Mueller Report – read Volume 1 – with the Mueller Report and, ah, we know some of the details of what they were doing and how they did it and how they impersonated Americans and what they used to gin-up people and how these bot farms and stuff, I wonder how many of it was actual people. But, you just have to ignore, you just have to ignore the, the negativity. The block and mute buttons were the greatest things ever on –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – Twitter and [chuckle] Instagram.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, this is your, ah, pinned tweet –

TARA SETMAYER: Yes.

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DR. HOFFMAN: – which for those who aren't on Twitter this is kind of like here's who I am in a nutshell. It's from January 2017 just after Trump's inauguration. Ah, I will never, ever; I will never shut up. Never be bullied into silence! "In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act." And this is from Orwell. So, um, Alyssa (phonetic spelling) asked, ah, you know, also on your Twitter feed you say you're a sane conservative.

TARA SETMAYER: [Chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: What promoted you to keep this tweet as your pin tweet and to label yourself as "sane conservative"?

TARA SETMAYER: So, I went back during the election and read 1984 because I saw a lot of similarities in what was happening.

DR. HOFFMAN: In 2016?

TARA SETMAYER: In 2016, yeah. And so, the more I read, the more I was horrified by the parallels and I was like, oh my God, we're like really living 1984 right now. Um, so I started becoming a little bit more obsessed with Orwell because it had been, it had been awhile. And um –

DR. HOFFMAN: Since the 8<sup>th</sup> grade –

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – English class. [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: So, I was like, yeah, let me go back to this. You know, war is peace and of that, it's like, it's, it really is applicable to what we're going through right now and a lot of the propaganda like don't believe – like Trump actually said, like, don't believe what they, what you see and hear [chuckle.] I was like, oh my God. It's like page 185. Um, so that's why I keep that because and also the second, the first part of it – what did I say – yeah, no I will never

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shut up – I think someone told me to shut up. Like, it might, might have been a troll or something, somebody, or somewhere and, um, I've always said that the power of life and death is in your tongue. It's a biblical principle. And, I live by that. I think your words are, they matter and they're very powerful and you have the ability to speak things into existence. And so, um, the freedom that we have in this country to speak your mind and the way, the platform that I have to do that, I consider it a privilege. So, no, you people – not you people – those people will never shut me up.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Um, I'm unapologetic for my passion and my desire to, to cut through the BS and, and speak the truth. And, and it looks like in a time of universal deceit, which is what we're living in, telling the truth is a revolutionary act because it, look at this, I'm, I'm like a lieutenant in the revolution, in, in the resistance. Whoever thought? And, so that's why I feel like it, it really encompasses the times we're living in now and who I am, my personality.

DR. HOFFMAN: Do; how do other conservatives who have, ah, adopted Trump's ideology and, and come on his side, how do they react to you typically?

TARA SETMAYER: [Chuckle.] Well, this is where the sane conservative part comes in because I feel like now as a, as a conservative I have to put a caveat because Trumpism and what's happening now is not Republicanism and it's sure as hell isn't conservatism. So, um, a lot of people who I've known for 20 years, who I've worked with, who I thought I knew, are unrecognizable now. It's like "Invasion of the Body Snatchers."

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: I'm like, who are you people? And, it, it's not just one or two.

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It's a lot. And, um, I just feel like they've all lost their [chuckle] minds. So, there's a certain amount of insanity that's going on here, ah, especially inside Washington that I just can't explain – I kind of can – but I just look at it and I'm like, what are you guys doing. So, I put that I'm a sane conservative because I think a lot of what they've done in selling themselves out and twisting themselves into pretzels to justify basically abandoning everything they ever stood for before is a certain amount of insanity. So no, I'm not like those people. I'm sane.

[Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: You certainly, ah, don't shy from sharing your opinion.

TARA SETMAYER: No.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: No.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: All right, I'm going to pull up another tweet. Oh, no. What happened? Oh, yes. Hang on. Ahh. Okay. Ah, [chuckle] here's another tweet –

TARA SETMAYER: Oh-oh.

DR. HOFFMAN: – the savages' tweet.

TARA SETMAYER: Oh, that's recent. Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: That is recent.

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, you say, ah, Trump has never used words like the savages to describe actual savages like Putin, Kim Jung-Un, MBS, and you can explain who those people are, um –

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

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DR. HOFFMAN: – for those who might not know – yet he attacks American elected officials particularly women of color with language like that. Notice a pattern here? And that’s a very angry emoji. [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, I’m curious –

TARA SETMAYER: That emoji and like I call it the rock emoji with the, with the eyebrow, those are my, my, my two favorite emojis.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, tell us what the pattern is that you’re seeing here and why you’re so angry about it.

TARA SETMAYER: I, I mean, Donald Trump literally has a bromance going on with Vladimir Putin, and Kim Jung-Un. It’s like he wants to have a ménage with them.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Like what is going on?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: The beautiful letters. We’re in love and –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – Putin and he fawns over him. I mean, good Lord!

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: They’re murderous dictators. They’re our sworn enemies. They kill their own people. I mean, there are North Koreans eating dirt to survive in labor camps. And this is someone who’s wonderful and, and, you know, wrote me beautiful letters, you’re fawning over? Vladimir Putin is a former KGB guy. He wants to see the destruction of our democracy. He, he wants to see America crumble, and this is who you take the word of over our intelligence community?

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Come on! I mean Duterte, he's another one, in the Philippines, who's, who is killing thousands of people in the extrajudicial killings over drug abuse, drug use. I mean, just name the dictator and Donald Trump thinks they're great.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: MBS, Mohammad bin Salman, we just passed the year anniversary of, of Khashoggi being murdered brutally at the orders of MBS. We all –

DR. HOFFMAN: The Washington Post –

TARA SETMAYER: – should know that.

DR. HOFFMAN: – reporter.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah, the Washington Post reporter walked into a consulate in Turkey and never came out. They killed him and saw, and sawed his, you know, body up and took his body parts out, for God's sakes. They had a body double that wore the clothes that he wore to try to fake people out on the, the video to say that, well he left, because they changed their story about what happened. And they, and then there was a, an audio and it was like, oh-oh, I guess we ought to change that story. But it's crazy. Anyway, the point is, the President is like buddies with these people. He thinks they're wonderful. He doesn't use that language about them. But here you have members of Congress who have a political disagreement with you, and you call them savages. And he uses certain coded language. Let's just be honest about what it is for certain things. Like he doesn't, he doesn't call, um, you know, white supremacists who kill people savages. He didn't use that term about the people with freaking tiki-torches say, saying Jews will not replace us. He said there were fine people on both sides. So those are' savages. But women of color, they're savages.

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People who represent inner cities, oh, they're rat infested, you know, savages.  
It's, ah, it's pretty obvious.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, speaking of foreign policy issues because you're talking a little bit about Trump's foreign policy, you mentioned in class today that you disagreed with a lot of Barack Obama's foreign policy initiatives.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: What is Trump doing or what should Trump be doing differently than you think Barack Obama did or –

TARA SETMAYER: Break up with the dictators is what he should do.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Okay? Let's start –

DR. HOFFMAN: So, this ménage –

TARA SETMAYER: – there.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Yes. No more ménages with the dictators.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Um, that's first. [Laughter.] That's first and foremost. Ah, this idea of America First sounds great to the people who felt, well, it goes back to Donald Trump playing off of the anxieties of people who are war fatigued, which I understand. Afghanistan has been a, a terrible failure. Iraq was not exactly a shining example of success. Um, we had ISIS as a result of failures of the Obama's (sic) policies, one of the, one of them ISIS was developed from that. Um, and it's still a mess. And, a lot of our brave young men and women in uniform have died, um, in vain especially in Afghanistan. So, I get where Donald

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Trump tapped into that with people and said screw this; we're not sending our people over there anymore. We're not, you know, the, the military was, got, you know, funding was cut and things under sequestration under Obama. Like he kind of picked and choose (sic) things that were, picked and chose things that were, um, areas of disagreement and really played them up to people's anxieties. And, the idea of America First is appealing to a lot of folks except until you find out the origin of what, where America First started – that expression. And that was when America didn't want to get involved as Hitler was, was get, was rising to power in Germany. There are people who were like, yeah, well that's over there; sorry, we, you know, it's, it's America first. That's not exactly an, an era or a time that I want to emulate.

DR. HOFFMAN: It was also an anti-Catholic movement –

TARA SETMAYER: Correct.

DR. HOFFMAN: – [indiscernible] a lot of different ethnicities –

TARA SETMAYER: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: – and religions in the U.S.

TARA SETMAYER: Yes, it was a very exclusive, um, nationalist movement that no one should want us going back to. That is not making America great again. Um, so, the, the, some of those things I think the President, he needs to stand up to the dictators. He's gotten, he's accomplished nothing in foreign policy. Nothing. Ah, what? Nothing but chaos and we are the laughingstock of the world. You know, you look at him when he, he pouts during G7 meetings. He doesn't show up for climate change meetings. Um, I do, I was not in agreement with the, um, Iran deal when, when we entered into it in 2015 for a couple of reasons. I felt it wasn't strong enough. Um, so I agreed with us pulling out of it

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but not without an alternative. You have to; the idea of just going at it alone is insane when you are looked to as the beacon of democracy and power and hope in the world and now all of a sudden we're just giving the middle finger to all our allies saying, well, no, we're going at it alone because you don't pay enough to NATO? That's crazy. But not unexpected from Donald Trump. He's a malignant narcissist so he doesn't understand what it's like to actually have alliances or allies or trust in relationships. He doesn't have a healthy view of that. Just look at the way he lives his own life. So, the damage he's doing with our allies, with, around the world is also very dangerous, um, and letting Putin and China kind of fill those voids because if America's not there that, that power vacuum will be filled. So, I worry, I like lay awake at night worrying about, um, where we're going to end up if we continue under Donald Trump's leadership in the world. There's another reason why, why I feel as though we can't, we can't take another four years of this.

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. Well, I'm finally going to get to your podcast.

[Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: "Honestly Speaking –

TARA SETMAYER: We've got plenty of time.

DR. HOFFMAN: – Honestly Speaking with Tara Setmayer". Um, I have found listening to your podcasts to be so illuminating. You rely on so many different sources of news, um, conservative, liberal, mainstream. Um, Jacob W. asks, he wants to know where do you get your news from? Who are some of your favorite reporters when you're going to head into a deep dive on your podcast?

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TARA SETMAYER: So, podcast deep dives? It depends on the subject matter. Um, for, oh man, it, it, it, it's true, I do pull from a lot of different things because I've been in this for a long time so, and I'm really nerdy –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – so I always –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – I like, I love to research things and that's the beauty also of having access to so much information just at like your fingertips. It's cool. Like, I remember when I was age in college, we had AOL, it was dialup, and you had to pay 10 dollars a month.

DR. HOFFMAN: Same.

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

TARA SETMAYER: So, this is like, you know, now it's like, wow, I can learn so much faster for free in my, in like in my bed with my fingers. This is awesome. I don't have to go to the computer lab.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Um, so some of the resources. Let's say, okay, um, foreign policy there's a couple. Like foreign policy, national security stuff, ah, intersection between national security and law, ah, two sites that I, I use a lot: Justsecurity.org, they have, it's made up of a lot of, of former intel, intelligence and national security professionals, um, so they're experts in their field; ah and then the other one is Lawfare blog, same thing, they have a lot of, um, more on the legal side of things where they, national security folks from the Department of Justice, CIA, um, former FBI agents and so they write from their experience, ah,

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they write from a very, um, ah, neutral point of view. So, those two are really good websites for like the deep dive nerdy stuff. Um, I'm also part of the leadership, um, network at the American Enterprise Institute, AEI, and AEI is one of the best thinktanks if you come from a right of center point of view. And they have a lot of scholars that do a lot of great work on all kinds of issues. So, if I'm looking for a scholar that I want to talk to on, let's say, criminal justice reform, I can go to AEI and I can, you know, talk to one of those folks. Or like, Brookings Institute or, you know, Cato Institute if it's more Libertarian on stuff. So, I just, it's just my nature of kind of, um, me being immersed in Washington, D.C. for so long I kind of know where to go. And so, it's like, you know, for like average everyday folks where do I send people? Sometimes, well, I get that question a lot. Like, where do get your news from because how do we know who to believe?

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TARA SETMAYER: The *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* are still reputable newspapers. They, you know, you can trust what you're reading. Not every, nothing, nowhere is perfect but they are still topnotch newspapers despite what the President tries to say. He's still talks to the *New York Times* all the time. He still gives them interviews. He still talks to Maggie Haberman. You know, he might, he might call them traitors in one sentence but he's giving them interviews in the next. So, um, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* are still the gold standard as far as, like, decent news. Um –

DR. HOFFMAN: And I, I would agree with that as –

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – a political science and communication professor. I always

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say the *New York Times* is, is if 50 years from now I want to know what was happening –

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – I'd look to the *New York Times* as –

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – the newspaper of record, and the *Washington Post*.

TARA SETMAYER: Absolutely.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, and I would add the *Wall Street Journal*, ah, to that as well.

TARA SETMAYER: Well, the *Wall Street Journal* used to be and the *Wall Street Journal* for straight news is still good. The *Wall Street Journal* opinion page has gone a little off the rails in the, in the Trump era which I'm disappointed to see.

DR. HOFFMAN: Pro Trump?

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah, pro Trump stuff and, and taking economic positions and finance positions that they never would have taken before. Um, as a conservative I used to, I used to read *National Review*. Ah, Bill Buckley was, William Buckley who founded the *National Review* many moons ago –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TARA SETMAYER: – is someone who was very influential in my conservative, um, political viewpoints. Um, I wish Bill Buckley was alive today; he'd have some very interesting things to say I'm sure about –

DR. HOFFMAN: What do you think –

TARA SETMAYER: – Trump.

DR. HOFFMAN: – he would say?

TARA SETMAYER: I think he would say what he said about Donald Trump in

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2000 which was that he was not a serious person and that we should not get caught up in a cultive personality. Um, he was very prescient in, in his description of Donald Trump, um, back in 2000. So, I don't think that William Buckley – taking the money, the monetary part of running websites aside – I can not see the *National Review* under William F. Buckley's leadership being supportive of what's going on today. Its so anathema to everything that conservatism stands for that I just don't see Buckley selling out like that.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Well, I'd like to show one more clip –

TARA SETMAYER: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – ah, before to some audience questions. This is more recent. Um, this comes from, ah, CNN, ah, in a conversation about the mass shootings in –

TARA SETMAYER: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – um, several different, ah, areas around the country. I think this was in August in San Jose and in Dayton. Um, and this is –

TARA SETMAYER: El Paso.

DR. HOFFMAN: – I thought was a great ex – I'm sorry, El Paso, thank you – I thought this was a great example of, ah, how you do not shy away from opinion.

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, let's play this.

VIDEO CLIP:

TARA SETMAYER: When George W. Bush visited troops, wounded warriors at Walter Reed Hospital – and actually it was one of our CNN colleagues who reminded me of this incident – Dana Perino wrote a book a couple of years ago where she outlined an instance where George W. Bush was at Walter Reed

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visiting wounded warriors and the mother of one of the soldiers lit into him. She was really upset that her son was wounded, and she expressed it. And sat there and just took it.

UNIDENTIFIED: Hum.

TARA SETMAYER: And when they got back on Marine One he looked out the window and said to her, said to Dana Perino, “Boy that mom was sure was mad at me. And you know what, she deserved; I deserved it.” And a tear came down his eye as they flew back to the White House.

UNIDENTIFIED: Hum.

TARA SETMAYER: Now, that is what a President does. When you are in a position of power, you’re the, you’re the most powerful man in the world, a lot of things come at you and you’re responsible for a lot of things, you just take it. You don’t sit there and go on Twitter and go, and, and attack people, and attack your political enemies –

UNIDENTIFIED: I know.

TARA SETMAYER: – and brag about –

UNIDENTIFIED: I know.

TARA SETMAYER: – crowd sizes. I mean, it’s –

UNIDENTIFIED: I know.

TARA SETMAYER: – awful.

UNIDENTIFIED: Is it; I mean, I’m just; having fresh off a plane today from Ohio, you know, and, and being surrounded by such sadness and such anger, I guess I’m sitting here wondering is it, is it possible for a nation to heal without, as you point out, you know, as, as, you know, George W. Bush or Barack Obama and countless others, you know –

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TARA SETMAYER: Anyone else.

UNIDENTIFIED: – without a console, without a consoler-in-chief, right?

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED: Especially one who divides.

TARA SETMAYER: I mean, I, I'm not quite sure. I mean, who do we turn to for that leadership? It sure as hell isn't, it hasn't been the Republican Party leadership. Um, they've succumb to this President's dishonor of the office time after time and make excuses for him over and over again when they were the same people – because I know, I was there, I was in the middle of those, those fights – Republicans were the same one's who went after Barack Obama for not, ah, being sensitive enough to terrorist attacks or not calling out radical Islam or going to play golf after a journalist was beheaded and he gave a speech – oh, he went to play golf; how awful of him. Where are those people now? Donald Trump over the weekend was yucking it up at his private golf course after these, these, these massacres happened and, as if, you know, he couldn't be bothered. And then he makes a speech on Monday where, after someone writes it for him, and we're supposed to think that that's going to make everything okay? I mean, he's so divisive, his rhetoric is so divisive it's dishonorable. He is dishonorable. He dishonors the memory of all of these people and I'm not quite sure who do we turn to in this country. Because you sure as hell don't have a consoler-in-chief, you've got a whiner-in-chief, a victim-in-chief, a twit, a Twitterer-in-Chief. Everything but what the office of the presidency requires in, in –

UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah.

TARA SETMAYER: – these moments. Trump never ever rises to the occasion and, and he never will. He just never will.

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DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: All right, I can go home now.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, I think that's, that's really inspiring to a lot of young women and women of color who, ah, feel that they don't necessarily know how to voice their opinion.

TARA SETMAYER: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: I mean, that's a pretty strong –

TARA SETMAYER: They can hang with me –

DR. HOFFMAN: – statement you're making.

TARA SETMAYER: – hang with me.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] So, one of my students, Halley (phonetic spelling), said what piece of advice would you give to someone who might be scared to speak up about their political beliefs due to gender, race, or any other reason, um, because people might, they might have a different political idea?

TARA SETMAYER: Exactly what my pin tweet says. Never be bullied into silence. We had, a, at dinner earlier tonight, one of the exercises, everyone had a, a question at their table and, um, it was your table where it said, what's one word to, word or phrase, to describe you. And, what was my word?

DR. HOFFMAN: It was – oh, I'm forgetting. It wasn't, it wasn't driven.

TARA SETMAYER: No.

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DR. HOFFMAN: It was –

TARA SETMAYER: That was somebody else's word. Unapologetic.

DR. HOFFMAN: Unapologetic.

TARA SETMAYER: Be unapologetic for who God made you. If you have a point of view you have an experience, you speak from, from experience, you want to express it to others, you feel there is an injustice, stand up because evil triumphs when good men do nothing and it takes – or good women – when good women do nothing, and it takes people to stand up and do something for things to change. So, sometimes that can be scary. It can be scary to go out on a limb when you're the only one who may feel that way, or you feel as though there might be retribution or a price to pay and only you can make the decision whether it's worth it for you or not. But, just imagine where this country would be if people did not stand up and speak out. So, be unapologetic if that's, if that's what you want to do then you do it. You speak out. But also listen because just because you might have a difference of opinion with someone, um, doesn't mean that you have to, that you're closeminded to other people and their opinion. Because what makes me a sane conservative – some people ask me that – is that I'm not so dogmatic where I'm like I don't care what you have to say. I, I, I'm right, I'm right and you're wrong. I never approach a conversation that way, ever. When I'm in, when I'm in a debate I don't go into the debate necessarily like yeah, I'm right and you're wrong. It's more of like, well depending on who I'm debating, sometimes these Trump people it's got to go that way –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – but no, when, when life was sane, and we used to have like real discussions about things –

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DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TARA SETMAYER: – it was really more about like – there would be times where I was like, you know what, you actually made a good point. I; you know what, I agree with that.

DR. HOFFMAN: I miss that.

TARA SETMAYER: There's nothing wrong with that.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] I miss that.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah. Like what happened to those days. It's so, like, now forget it. It's like it, you can't have those kinds of conversations. Like, I miss arguing over the merits of like social security privatization. Like, I, [chuckle] I miss those conversations, you know. Like, let's talk about it. Um, no, forget it. Now we're like arguing over whether we should be sending back, you know, American-born congresswomen of color because they disagree with the President. It's, ah, it's, it's nuts. But –

DR. HOFFMAN: Well –

TARA SETMAYER: – that's my advice. Never be bullied into silence and be unapologetic for who God made you and never be afraid to stand up for what you believe in.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, and that's one of the reasons –

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: Thank you. Thank you. That's what I live by.

DR. HOFFMAN: That's one of the reasons I brought here because I think that young students who are in their, ah, teens and 20's don't remember a time when Republicans and Democrats could have conversations and debates and be like, okay, I see your point; I can see your point. Um, and, I think that it's, ah,

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unfortunate that we've gotten into that situation. So –

TARA SETMAYER: That's the tribalism. I mean –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TARA SETMAYER: – I'm sure we've heard this now, right? The term that we're so tribal now. Everyone's just, we're treating to their tribes and you know tribalism –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Indiscernible] labels.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah. And tribalism in, um, connotes something also a little bit more savage, right? Like, your tribe, what did you do, you like, you had to defend your tribe, like, to survive. So, there was no compromise. It was like, you fight to the death to defend your tribe. That is not how we should be conducting ourselves in this country. And, I, I worry that we're losing the ability to have dialogue, to be able to disagree, um, without being so disagreeable. It's, ah, we're losing –

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh my God. That's the same quote I [indiscernible] –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – [laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Really?

DR. HOFFMAN: Students, right? We're doing this?

TARA SETMAYER: [Indiscernible.]

DR. HOFFMAN: How can we disagree without being disagreeable?

TARA SETMAYER: [Indiscernible.] [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

TARA SETMAYER: There you go.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] Well, okay, before we get to the, ah, audience

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Q and A, and I'll ask my two student volunteers who are going to be monitoring the Catchbox, ah, Justin and Alyssa I believe.

TARA SETMAYER: Are we, are we taking, like, is it like church?

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Are you passing the plate around?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: No, it's –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – it's a literal, like, box. It's like a fuzzy box that has a microphone –

TARA SETMAYER: I'm just kidding.

DR. HOFFMAN: – and you toss it around.

TARA SETMAYER: I'm just kidding.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, its quite, quite a bit of fun. I was a little nervous about it at first –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – but I think its actually worked out well. But, I'm going to ask you kind of a, a, a difficult question perhaps. So, you've been a critic of Trump, this comes from Alyssa as well, um, is there anything you think Trump has done right since he's gone into office?

TARA SETMAYER: Yes, actually. Um, I do agree; I did agree with the tax cuts, ah, as obviously I'm a fiscal conservative and I, I thought that finally, okay, we can do some things to kickstart the economy. We didn't need Trump to do that though. We could have had any sane Republican who knows how to govern get

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something like that done. Um, I also agreed with the criminal justice reform bill. Ah, despite growing up in a law enforcement family, working on border security issues when I worked in Congress, um, being married to a law enforcement officer, I'm pretty hardcore when it comes to law and order and security and things like that. But, during my time working on, on Capitol Hill I also was, um, a part of an effort to help two border patrol agents who were unjustly imprisoned for 11 and 12 years for a shooting incident with an illegal immigrant drug smuggler in Texas. And, their names were Ramos (phonetic spelling) and Compian (phonetic spelling) and it became a huge national issue in 2007 and '08, well, 2006 really was when it started through 2008. I became the Erin Brockovich of that case –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckling.]

TARA SETMAYER: – and, um, it really changed, it changed my life because I not only was able to really work on something that actually impacted lives, um, but it opened my eyes to how screwed up the criminal justice system really is. Um, we still have a great criminal justice system but it's flawed and there are inequalities and, um, I mean, inequities, and it's, ah, the idea of mandatory minimum sentence, sentencing, private prisons, ah, a lot of those things I have kind of changed my viewpoint on. And, you know, and, and sentencing reform needed to happen. Um, like, stopping recidivism rates for prisoners in, in prison. Doing things that try to help people become more productive citizens when they leave. So, during that time I had become a lot more open to criminal justice reform proposals and, ah, the First Step Act was, was actually a good first step. There needs to be a lot of other things done but I'm glad to see that at least there was something being done about that and, um, I, I, I, the, I don't want to say the

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President deserves credit because he didn't do anything. He just signed it. But, I'm glad that at least Jared Kushner and Kim Kardashian convinced him to sign it.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: All right.

TARA SETMAYER: That's about where it ends though. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, can my student volunteers come forward and, ah, we'll take some questions from the audience. So, let's take one from, ah, maybe the middle section here?

TARA SETMAYER: I'm really glad you explained the Cashbox (sic) thing –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – because when we were walking in and someone was like, oh, they have the Cashbox and I'm like why are they taking money?

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: So –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Oh, like [laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, I, I get you, I get you.

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.] I was so confused. So, I'm glad that this is –

DR. HOFFMAN: You, you toss it –.

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – and you catch it.

TARA SETMAYER: That's what it sounded like. Cashbox.

DR. HOFFMAN: I know, I hear you.

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TARA SETMAYER: So, I'm like, the Cashbox [indiscernible.]

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Justin, do we have anyone, it looks like there's someone in the black and white striped shirt here. I hope I'm not misinterpreting the color.

TARA SETMAYER: Oh my God, it's literally a Catchbox.

DR. HOFFMAN: It is.

TARA SETMAYER: Okay, I don't know why I'm so fascinated with this. Okay.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

Q: Um, with so many, ah, defenders in the Republican Senate, can you imagine a scenario getting to a point where, um, we, we got past, ah, a resolution, ah, in, in the, in the House to where the Senate could actually –

TARA SETMAYER: Remove him?

Q: – ah, remove the President?

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

TARA SETMAYER: Um, if, if you were to ask me that question today, like right now if that vote were taken, I would say no. There is too many senators right now who are scared to death of losing their seats, um, than – and you know, when you have the President tweeting out about civil wars, you know, people, they, they kind of go oh my God, like, what are, what are my, what, I'll get primaried; what are my constituents going to do; what, what's going to happen; I'm not trying to be the, you know, the target of that. So, they don't stand up. Um, Mike Murphy who was a, ah, Republican campaign strategist for John McCain and Mitt Romney – Mike Murphy is also a Never Trump guy – he said, if you were to take a secret ballot, secret ballot right now you'd have at least 30

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Senators that would vote to get rid of Trump. I think it would probably be 40 because they hate Donald Trump. They really do. He knows, and he knows that they don't like him. But, there's a symbiotic relationship there and they know that that, their political fate hinges on support for him. So, I wouldn't hold my breath on removal. And, Donald Trump will never resign. Never. He will never have the decency to resign, ever. Look at the way he's freaking out now and its just an investigation. So, unfortunately, no. I don't, I don't think that you'll ever get 67 to remove him. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't move forward with impeachment. History needs to know. When people look back, they need to know that the American people were not okay with the behavior of this President; the lawlessness, the abuse of power, the lying, all of it. Is; this is exactly what our founding fathers argued over when they decided to put impeachment into the Constitution. Just go back and read what Madison and Mason, and Edmund Rudolph (sic), ah, argued over when they were putting that in during the Constitution Convention. They didn't want an imperial President.

DR. HOFFMAN: Constitutional history is suddenly becoming so vogue, in vogue.

TARA SETMAYER: Well, this –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – is the First State, right? Delaware is why –

DR. HOFFMAN: That's true.

TARA SETMAYER: – [indiscernible] history here.

DR. HOFFMAN: That's true. All right. Let's take another question from the audience? Justin, there's one over on the far side there.

Q: Thank you. Um –

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TARA SETMAYER: I feel bad that, like my back has been to you. I will turn this way now.

Q: You're fine. Thank you. [Chuckle.] Um, I was wondering, ah, even though there are many vocal Never Trumpers', you know, um, at least the polling seems to suggest, most of the Republican Party very much supports President Trump.

TARA SETMAYER: Um-hum.

Q: I'm wondering if you'd comment on that or maybe what your vision of conservatism is, Republicanism, and how it is not represented by Trump, or like how you think it differentiates?

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

TARA SETMAYER: So – thank you, yes, for that, that's a good question. Um, so, right now the idea of; well it depends on what poll you look at.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TARA SETMAYER: Rasmussen is not a reliable poll. They used to be –

DR. HOFFMAN: True.

TARA SETMAYER: – but they were bought –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle.]

TARA SETMAYER: – out by different people and now their polling methodology is just not, it's not industry standard. So, whenever Trump is tweeting out, "95 percent," you know, "support of the Republican Party", that's all Rasmussen. "50 plus percent approval" – no, he doesn't. Um, so, it's about between 75 and 85 percent depending on the poll, ah, which is interesting because people like George Bush and Reagan, they would have like consistent high 80's – 90's. So, there is, you know, there are people who are uncomfortable with Trump in the

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Republican Party. Ah, I wish there would be more but it's, it's interesting. And, the more erratic he behaves I think the more fatigued some Republicans are, like the moderates. Just look at how many Republican suburban districts turned blue in the midterm elections. That tells you right there that there is a fracture. And, it's potentially lethal for the Republican Party if they don't get this together because people are never going to come back as long as they keep behaving like this. So, um, it troubles me that there's still over 50 percent, 60, 70 percent of Republicans that are still supporting this insanity. Um, I, I mean, 68 percent of Republicans said that they're okay with the President of the United States reaching out to a foreign government and asking them for help in an election. What? I mean, there was, I forget what it was now, but, but it was about a year and a half ago there was a polling out that showed over 40 percent of Republicans felt that the press was the enemy of the people. That's scary. I mean, we've always had a tension with, you know, the liberal press and all of that but the enemy of the people? That's like Hitler talk. That's what he said. Hitler called the press "Lügenpresse", the lying press.

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

TARA SETMAYER: So, and I'm not being melodramatic with that because people say, oh, you know, the, the Nazi Germany references, no, there's a lot of parallels there as far as propaganda, style, tactics, terminology. It's scary. Know your history. Um, so that part, you know, concerns me about the Republican Party. As far as what, what it looks like now compared to the conservatism that, that I was brought up on and what made me a conservative? I, it's just, ah, I mean that's a, that's a really long conversation but I would say that it's not, um, it's not the conservatism of Russell Kirk or Edmond Burke or the economics of

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Adam Smith and Bill Buckley or Ronald Reagan, you know, the shining city on the hill optimism; the, the, you know, individual, a smaller government; ah, individual empowerment; ah, personal responsibility, you know. Those certain, those basics – prudence, um, you know, look at prudence in the law. Um, those, those, those kinds of – morality. [Chuckle.] Ah, those things are out the window right now and that’s very oversimplifying conservatism. But just the basic principles of it. Um, that’s, the, none of this is, is the conservatism that, that I grew up on and most of the people who are supporting Trump now, they know that this is not conservatism, but they’re intoxicated with power and –

AUDIENCE: [Mumbling.]

TARA SETMAYER: – selling out as a result.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Let’s, lets bring the Catchbox, not cashbox, Catchbox –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.] I was like was it –

DR. HOFFMAN: – over here.

TARA SETMAYER: – like cash me outside?

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Is it like that?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: How about a question from over on the, it looks like we’ve got a few in the back there, Alyssa, if you want to – you can toss from there but I –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – might walk towards a little bit.

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TARA SETMAYER: I think I want one of these things. I'm obsessed with this Catchbox.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

Q: What, what member of the, ah, Republican Party are; what, what candidate would you be willing to support on either party right now?

TARA SETMAYER: So, I –

DR. HOFFMAN: Do you mean in 2020?

TARA SETMAYER: You mean for 2020?

Q: For 2020.

TARA SETMAYER: Ah, I am fully 100 percent behind Joe Biden.

DR. HOFFMAN: And I did not know that when [chuckle] I invited her. I'm just –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – I'm just saying for full clarity sake. But go ahead.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Yes. Yes please, please for Joe Biden.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: Yes.

AUDIENCE: [Applause] [cheers.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Clap] We're in his backyard. It's, um, and I'm not just saying that because we're in his backyard. Um, because I feel like, even though I may disagree with many of Joe Biden's personal policies, like I'm not a

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Democrat, however, he is a good and decent man, he knows how to govern, ah, he will, he'll bring back some normalcy. Um, Thomas Friedman from the *New York Times* wrote and op-ed a, a couple of months ago that said, look, progressives we understand that you guys are passionate about stuff but fight the revolution later; get Trump out of office; the revolution ain't nowhere; you're going to have, whoever you get in there, whether its Joe Biden or you know, someone that's moderate like that, they're still going to be more of an ally for your causes than another four years of Donald Trump. So, don't shoot yourselves in the foot and go too radical on the other side because that person will not win in a general election. That's just the reality, political reality we're living in now.

DR. HOFFMAN: Do you think that's really true though because –

TARA SETMAYER: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: – I mean, primaries –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: A hundred percent. There's (sic) about five states that, that are going to determine this election and it's, it's not going to be California, New York, Delaware or, um, you know, any place like that.

DR. HOFFMAN: New Jersey.

TARA SETMAYER: New Jersey, yeah. Its not going to be those places. It's going to be Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Florida, um, maybe New Hampshire, maybe Iowa. That's it, folks. I'm sorry to say. But that's the way it's going to be, and Donald Trump only won the, the electoral college by 11,000, oh, I'm sorry, by 77,000 votes in three states. That's it. That's like a college football,

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less than a college football game at Penn State.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Murmuring.]

TARA SETMAYER: Seriously. So, you know, we've got to, I just implore my Democratic friends to be smart about this. I know that, you know, it's hard because there's things that people are really passionate about and you want to see changes and I get that. But, anyone else in the current field in my opinion will not beat Donald Trump in those states.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right.

TARA SETMAYER: They won't.

DR. HOFFMAN: I'm a numbers nerd. We'll have a conversation about that later.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah, we can.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: But let's have another, ah, question –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – perhaps from the middle of the group here?

Q: Hey Tara. Um –

TARA SETMAYER: Hello.

Q: First of all, thank you so much for being here.

TARA SETMAYER: My pleasure.

Q: So, one of the reasons that I, I really love the National Agenda series in general is just because it gives me – and, and I'm a liberal – the opportunity to, to meet, hear from and ask questions to people who are on the other side. And, it seems like to me that, that liberals and conservatives – and I

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don't even necessarily mean, you know, at the politician level, just regular, everyday people who identify as conservative or liberal – aren't really communicating with each other. Not having conversations. Um, I wanted to ask, how we as a nation can start to communicate better with one another, listen to each other's sides, not get into conversations that really are just to put our opinions and try to change someone's mind, but, just really to start understanding one another.

TARA SETMAYER: You know, that's a hard question. It used to not be –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TARA SETMAYER: – it used to not really be a hard question.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TARA SETMAYER: But it's really – I don't know.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: And that's scares me and I'm not afraid to say that. I don't know what the answer is. But, the recognition that we need that, especially from your generation, gives me hope because that tells me that there are, you know, the first step to fixing a problem is admitting you have one. Right?

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: So, recognizing that this is a problem I think is a great beginning because there are a lot of people that are like, shh, there's nothing wrong with this; this is perfect, this is perfect. You know? They, they, they don't even see that there's an issue. So, I think that, I started to elude to this earlier, like, you need to listen. It's okay. Like don't approach conversations all the time about trying to prove someone wrong. Its really just about listening and sharing your perspective because whether you're right or wrong is not going to change

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anything between you and that person or whatever is happening right then. It's not going to make a damn bit of difference. So, you what, what, it's like run around up the Rocky Steps. Yeah, I'm right. Like –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – you know, what is that going to do? You know? So, I just think that we need to have a, a more, um, a healthier view of, of disagreement. Like, how you converse with people. Um, you know, and, and also I think a lot of people find a certain amount of self, self-worth in arguments. So, like, if you, if someone doesn't agree with you, you somehow think that's a reflection on you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

TARA SETMAYER: Don't personalize it. It's not, it's not personal. I mean, if someone doesn't agree with you. That's okay, it's all right. You can still go and like grab a cup of coffee. It's all right. Um, now, unless it's something that's just like so fundamentally diametrically opposed to your belief system where you're just like, I, I can't be friends with that person. I mean, that's should be few and far between things. But, it's like, you know, that person's like, you know, Hitler was great then you're like, okay, we [chuckle] can't be –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – friends. [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: I mean, maybe, if you're into that but, you know what I mean?

DR. HOFFMAN: I might be curious about that conversation.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah, well, you know, nowadays –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

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TARA SETMAYER: – you’d be surprised.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: I think there’d more [chuckle] people willing to have that conversation than in the past. Um, but that’s, I think, that’s the way to approach it. Just don’t go into conversations or when you know that you, you’re approaching someone that has a different point of view. Listen to their point of view. And don’t necessarily just be like that’s stupid and insult the person. I mean –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TARA SETMAYER: – you might think that on the inside but don’t say, you don’t have to say that, you know what I mean? Its just like, okay well I appreciate that point of view; I just disagree. And that’s that.

DR. HOFFMAN: That’s really good advice. Thank you. Let’s take one more question? Maybe from the back or in the middle here, Alyssa?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Whoa.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

Q: [Indiscernible] hands –

TARA SETMAYER: You got to get, get that guy a jersey.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

Q: [Chuckle.] Um, so a little more personal than analytical here?

TARA SETMAYER: Sure.

Q: Ah, you briefly mentioned some of the sacrifices that someone particularly in your position has to be willing to make in order to enact

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change.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

Q: What 20 years from now would be that change that would validate, validate the sacrifices that you've made?

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

TARA SETMAYER: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

TARA SETMAYER: In 20 years from now –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – I think it would be – huh. I, I mean, that, that's hard. That's a hard question. To validate the sacrifices, I have made now. I think in 20 years seeing history books write about what an aberration the Trump era was, and we have a flourishing Republican Party that looks more like me than it does like him. I think that would validate my position.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah. I kind of feel like we have to give yellow guy in the back a shot because –

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh [indiscernible] –

TARA SETMAYER: – I feel like the people in the back always get the, the short-end of the stick because people don't see them.

DR. HOFFMAN: Did he have his hand up –

TARA SETMAYER: He did.

DR. HOFFMAN: – for a while. Okay.

TARA SETMAYER: Right there.

DR. HOFFMAN: Can we do one more?

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TARA SETMAYER: That gentleman right there.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you, Steve.

Q: I was just going to ask –

UNIDENTIFIED: No, no, no.

DR. HOFFMAN: Wait.

TARA SETMAYER: No, no. You've got to get the Catchbox –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: There we go.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right.

TARA SETMAYER: It's –

Q: Okay, um –

TARA SETMAYER: – official now.

Q: Is this, is this, okay, there it goes.

TARA SETMAYER: Yes, that thing is on.

Q: So –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

Q: – this stuff didn't all just start with Trump though. Like –

TARA SETMAYER: [Indiscernible.]

Q: – the southern strategy happened in the 60's and there was the death panel and birther nonsense all through the Obama Administration. How'd you deal with that stuff –

TARA SETMAYER: The –

Q: – before now? Like, did you think of them as fringe?

TARA SETMAYER: Well, in the 60's I wasn't alive.

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DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.] Um –

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

TARA SETMAYER: – but you're right. It did not just start with Donald Trump. Ah, the birther stuff at the time, I was like, okay, this is, this is nuts. You know? Like, I mean of course at first you're like – well – for a second. But then after a while it was like, okay, this is just completely nuts. They're just, you know, going, there, there was a, a writer named Jerome Corsi who actually went to Kenya, got himself detained while he was over there trying to look for Obama's relatives to prove that he was born there. I mean, it was completely nutso stuff.

TARA SETMAYER: Um, and at the time I was just like, come on, guys, is this really the, the hill we want to die on here? What are we doing? Now, I will admit that I think initially I was naïve to the level of just over racism that went into some of the attacks on Barack Obama. At the time, I was kind of like, [indiscernible] some element of that but, ah, looking back now at where we are, like, where we are now and how emboldened people seem to be being a lot more vocal in their racism, um, clearly that was percolating, ah, a lot more than I wanted to admit to. So, yeah, that was, ah, it, a lot of this started before that. And, we discussed this in, in class earlier. I don't think it was just that. That, that was an element, but it was also a lot of people who just felt aggrieved. A lot of people felt left behind, they felt aggrieved, they felt they weren't heard, and Donald Trump was the savior who came in the gate to give these folks a voice. Um, whether that's wrong or right, but that's how a lot of people feel. Like, their, their support for Trump is not necessarily rational. It's emotional because they say that he's

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finally, oh, finally, someone who talks like I do, finally someone who's standing up for us, fighting for our country. And, you know, he chooses his words very carefully. He maybe an ignoramus in a lot of things but he's a very, very good marketer. He knows how to use mass communication, he knows how to repeat messages, he knows those tactics and he knows the buzz words for, to get certain groups riled up. So, yeah, it's been percolating for a little while now. Um, but the elements, the uglier elements of this were not mainstreamed for a long time. I mean, when David Duke tried to run for Senate in Louisiana, George H.W. Bush told him to get the hell out of here. He was, like, condemned. The Bill Buckley's of the world and the conservative, um, intelligentsia said no, hell no. No, we're not doing that. You're, you're not, we're, you, we're not accepting you. Today I'm surprised David Duke doesn't have a Cabinet position –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – under this administration. Oh, I forgot, Donald Trump doesn't know who he is. [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.] Who?

AUDIENCE: [Indiscernible.]

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you for all of those great questions. Um, I do want to, ah, tell you about a couple of other initiatives we're doing and end with my Doc Hoff's Quick Take which, ah, is, is my new thing I'm doing at the end of the, the show. So, one of the things we're engaging in this semester is something called Free Intelligent Conversations. And, the picture that you see is from last Friday. We had several students, and I'm kind of in the background there, holding up signs that say Free Intelligent Conversations.

TARA SETMAYER: I like it. [Chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: And, ah, the founder, the CEO and founder of this nonprofit organization, Kyle Emil (phonetic spelling), um, is actually going to be with us next Wednesday between 2 and 3:30. He founded this organization based on just the fact that he thought people needed to talk to each other and engage with each other and have conversations with each other. And, he has a great set of cards. They're conversational cards that, um, have non-political, non-religious, and kind of innocuous questions but that help us get to know each other a little better. And you mentioned one of those earlier.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, I thought I, I randomly picked one for you.

TARA SETMAYER: Oh-oh.

DR. HOFFMAN: I thought maybe you could answer this question from the Free Intelligent Conversations. What absolutely excites you right now?

TARA SETMAYER: What absolutely excites me right now? Personally, or professionally? It doesn't matter. Well, I mean, this could be kind of hokey but what excites me right now is the fact that I have a really awesome husband and we're very happily married –

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DR. HOFFMAN: Aahh.

TARA SETMAYER: – and, we are partners in everything. So, the idea of going through all of this –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Indiscernible.]

TARA SETMAYER: – with him by my side is very exciting to me because it's, um, I thought there was a point in my life where I thought that I would not have that, and God thought otherwise. So, that is something that excites me, um, on a, on a real personal level. Like, the idea of like, oh I could [indiscernible] really cool partner the whole way through this, um, is exciting. So, that's on a personal level. Um, on a professional level what really excites me, what really excites me now is actually kind of [chuckle] exhausting at the same time. But, I relish the fight that we're about to go into because I really feel like the soul of this country is at stake. It's true. Not to just steal a, a Joe Biden expression but he –

DR. HOFFMAN: That is a Joe Biden expression.

TARA SETMAYER: – but he's, he's right about that. And, and I wish that he would focus a little bit more on that in his campaign to remind people of what's at stake because nothing that's going on right now is normal. And, you shouldn't be okay with any of it. Even if you're a Republican, even if you support Donald Trump, you need to think about, like, is this really how you want your government to function? Or, would you be okay with this if it were Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton? And if you cannot say yes then you're a hypocrite and you need to have some self-reflection. So, I relish the fight that we're about to get in because we're at a crossroads. Everybody says that every election, you know, every four years – it's a crossroads –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

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TARA SETMAYER: No, we're really at a crossroads now. Like, this time we mean it and, um, I, I, I get excited about opportunities like this because I hope that I can kind of inspire more people to also get involved, make a difference, get people to the polls, run for an office, get the word out because complacency is, could be the death of our democracy. We don't want that. And we also don't want an, an uninformed electorate because what happens when you get an uninformed electorate? We're living it right now. So, I relish the fight because this is the, our country's worth fighting for and, and our families, your generation leaving a country that, that's intact for your generation and passing that on is worth fighting for. And, you know, John Adams once said that every democracy eventually commits suicide so I'm kind of like we need to put down the knife.

DR. HOFFMAN: Oooh.

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: Lets put down the knife. [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, that's a great example of how inciteful these Free Intelligent Conversations –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – can be. Of course, tonight is free and open to the public, but I really encourage you to come look for my students and myself holding these signs. Ah, this would be next Wednesday on the Green, weather pending. Um, we'll be out near Memorial Hall and I know my students are really excited to talk with you. Um, it's been really fun. Ah, really engaging and it's great to see

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people who engage in these conversations walk away with a smile. Sometimes we just need to connect with each other as human beings. And that's it.

TARA SETMAYER: We have a lot more in common than we don't which is another –

DR. HOFFMAN: Absolutely.

TARA SETMAYER: – a point when you're having a conversation with people. Find common ground. You'd be surprised.

DR. HOFFMAN: Absolutely. Okay. I'm going to wrap up with Doc Hoff's Quick Take. [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: I love it. I think of DOC OCK, I'm a Marvel person –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: – so I'm like, I'm like waiting for the, the eight tentacles to come out [indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: I don't know about that. But, I, I've discovered that, you know, in an era of fake news and disinformation and misinformation we're really, ah, have to be very defensive of our own responses to information that we get. We have to know how to interpret political ads, mailers. There are so many places where politicians, parties will try to deceive their audiences. And, ah, I mean, we know. We have evidence of foreign intelligence, um, inter, interference into the last general election but –

TARA SETMAYER: Volume 1.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, Volume 1.

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

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DR. HOFFMAN: I think Putin today, actually, just joked that, um, we're not going meddle – oh, like, asked if he's going to meddle in 2020 election he said, no, but just wait, kind of like a under his breath sort of thing.

TARA SETMAYER: Well, Trump said that to him the last time they were together. They were [indiscernible] like schoolgirls and he was like, don't meddle in the election, okay. I mean, good Lord.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: I know. I'm like, I'm like –

DR. HOFFMAN: So, here's the things guys. This is my Quick Take, is, we have to be diligent on our own watches to look for what is behind the message that we're seeing. Here's an email I got from the Trump Campaign yesterday. Actually, they sent it out today as well.

TARA SETMAYER: Why are you getting emails from the Trump Campaign?

DR. HOFFMAN: Because that's what I do. I'm –

TARA SETMAYER: I'm just kidding. I'm just giving –

DR. HOFFMAN: – a political scientist –

TARA SETMAYER: – you a hard time.

DR. HOFFMAN: I get, I get emails from all of them.

TARA SETMAYER: I'm just giving you a hard time. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: You should see my in, inbox.

TARA SETMAYER: Oh, don't worry. I still, I still get all of the emails too. They –

DR. HOFFMAN: I get all of them.

TARA SETMAYER: – they haven't figured out I'm part of the resistance yet.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, this is a poll from the Trump Campaign where you can click on support for impeachment.

TARA SETMAYER: Oh boy.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, you can see this. Um, and you can see that, what is it, 90-something percent of people say from the bite, Breitbart –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – Impeachment Poll, um, 90 percent of the people say that they support this. So, here's what happens. If you obviously look at the source of these polls – Breitbart is a very conservative source – um, but also scroll over these messages that come in these emails. Um, ah, Trump had a, a message that was do you support an impeachment or not. If you scroll over this, and I don't know if this is something from some 90's kid but like, the link is the same [chuckle] no matter where you scroll –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Um-hum. Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – over.

TARA SETMAYER: Um-hum, um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – that icon. Pay attention to that. It's not meant to take your opinion, it's meant to –

TARA SETMAYER: No.

DR. HOFFMAN: – get your contact information –

TARA SETMAYER: Yep.

DR. HOFFMAN: – and then to get you to pay, give money.

TARA SETMAYER: Yep.

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DR. HOFFMAN: This happens on both sides. I'm not sole, soling (sic) out –.

TARA SETMAYER: That's true.

DR. HOFFMAN: – the Trump Campaign on this. So, learn about scrolling, um, even if it says Official Trump Po. Even if it says this is your poll ID number. Guess what?

TARA SETMAYER: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: Every other person who received that email got the same poll ID number.

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, even if the email says that Trump specifically wants to hear from his number one supporter, Lindsay Hoffman –

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – which has happened. So –

TARA SETMAYER: It's true.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – here's another story. This comes from the *Washington Post* yesterday. They reported that officials in Montana had to warn residents for the second time this year about surveys sent by the Republican National Committee that mimic the look of Federal Census forms with the goal of soliciting money –

TARA SETMAYER: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – for President Trump's reelection campaign. The mailers were labeled 2019 Congressional District Census informed recipients they'd been selected to represent voters in Bozeman, Montana. The accompanying literature made requests for donations urging recipients to send at least 15

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dollars to help pay for the costs of processing the census document if they were unable to afford an amount in the requested range of 25 dollars to 1,000 dollars. This is just downright deceptive.

TARA SETMAYER: Oh, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: We're no longer in, in an era where you find just dubious flyers left under your windshield wipers on your car at the mall parking lot. Um, just today, according to Politico, like I said, when asked if Russia would interfere in 2020 Vladimir Putin leaned into the microphone and mimicked a whisper, I'm going to tell you a secret; yes, sure we're going to do that. Don't tell anybody. The quip at the Russia Energy Week Panel elicited laughter and applause, um, but, we –

TARA SETMAYER: Where was that? Did they say? Where was it –

DR. HOFFMAN: This was in, in, at the Russia Energy –

TARA SETMAYER: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – Week Panel in, in Russia. So, we have to be aggressive. We. You have to be aggressive in our own factchecking. We have to sometimes ruffle some feathers if people we know are sharing misinformation and disinformation.

TARA SETMAYER: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, Uncle Joe, I love you but, sorry, this is not accurate information. We need to challenge our own confirmation biases. When we want to believe something is true or when we desperately want to disprove it. So, check yourself before you wreck yourself.

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

AUDIENCE: [Cheering.] [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: The 90's hip hop reference.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] Thank you, Ice Cube. [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: Ice Cube.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: Ice Cube –

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you, Ice Cube.

TARA SETMAYER: – circa 1992. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] Right?

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. So, I'm going to wrap up here reminding you about our, ah, Speak Up audio essay contest. There are, ah, cash prizes for this audio essay contest [indiscernible].

TARA SETMAYER: That's where the Cashbox is.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, we want us; you to tell us a story about your perceptions of our democracy, 243 years in, what do you think about it? Um, we also have our next speaker. It's a bit of a, a lag before our next speaker comes around but it's going to be a big one.

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TARA SETMAYER: Ooh.

DR. HOFFMAN: Former Governor Chris Christy of New Jersey. He is also a University of Delaware alum.

TARA SETMAYER: That's going to be fun, folks.

AUDIENCE: [Murmuring.] [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: It's going to be fun.

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: His recently published book, "Let Me Finish: Trump, the Kushners, Bannon, New Jersey, and the Power of In-Your-Face Politics," will be available for purchase. And this will be another Republican, ah, perspective that I imagine will be probably a little bit different from tonight.

TARA SETMAYER: A little bit different than mine.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, ah, again, I want to thank our speaker, Tara Setmayer.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TARA SETMAYER: [Chuckle.]

AUDIENCE: [Cheering.]

TARA SETMAYER: Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: And I hope to see you back here, ah, right here in, in this room, ah, September – oh I'm sorry, September – November 6<sup>th</sup>.

TARA SETMAYER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you so much for being here.

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