

NATIONAL AGENDA SPEAKER SERIES

ASMA KHALID

HOSTED BY

Center for Political Communication
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Asma Khalid Radio journalist - covered the presidential 2016 election for NPR and WBUR in Boston. She joined NPR's political team to focus on the intersection of demographics and politics. She was also a founding member of the NPR Politics podcast. After the election, Khalid drew attention with her essay, "[What It Was Like as a Muslim to Cover the Election](#)," where she described public reaction as she traveled the country talking to voters at town halls, rallies, churches, and diners campaign reporter focusing on the intersection of Demographics + Politics in Election 2016.

Transcript of Event

Date: October 4, 2017

Place: Mitchell Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE

DR. HOFFMAN: Good evening everyone and thank you for joining us at the Seventh Annual National Agenda Program brought to you by University of Delaware's Center for Political Communication. Tonight we have support from the office of the Provost and it; it's cosponsored by the Journalism Department, the Journalism program, and the Department of Communication. I am Dr. Lindsay Hoffman. I am the Director of National Agenda and the Associate Director of the Center for Political Communication. This year we're delving into the many divides that face Americans in 2017. As part of this programming we, we feature nationally known speakers including former Vice President Joe Biden, as was just announced yesterday, the Governor of Ohio John Kasich will be joining us on October 17th at 1:00 p.m. Tickets for students have already sold out so that event will be live streamed and as tickets become available we'll make those available to students. You can find more information about that event at cpc.udel.edu/nationalagenda. We've already heard from a, a number of different divides facing the nation including Brianna Wu, a first time congressional candidate who was motivated to run based on her experience with online harassment. And we've heard from David Joy, an Appalachian novelist who gave us a unique perspective on the American South. You can watch both of those talks at cpc.udel.edu/nationalagenda. Coming up we'll hear from a standup comedian with Cuban roots, two former congressmen from opposite sides of the aisle, and of course, Joe Biden and Governor John Kasich, October 17th at 1 p.m. right here in Mitchell Hall. You can find the full schedule at udel.edu/nationalagenda and if you appreciate these events please sign up for our email list which is outside in the lobby as you leave. And, consider

supporting the CPC so we can continue to bring you such high quality programming. Just go to cpc.udel.edu/support. Okay, I think that's last web link I'm going to name, name for tonight. Tonight's event is free and open to the public like all of our events to create an open space for thoughtful dialogue. I encourage audience participation both from the audience here in Mitchell Hall as well as on Twitter. You can just tweet @udelnationalagenda, or I'm sorry, udelagenda on Twitter for a chance to join the discussion. But, as I always say before we get started, I'd like to remind our audience that civil and courteous dialogue is vital to the success of this National Agenda Program. While we may seem more divided than at any time in recent history we are still bound together as Americans and as human beings. 2017 brings us into an era of great discord; overt racism, brutal violence, and a seeming inability to bridge our differences. But, I truly believe that it is possible. That's what we do here at National Agenda. We demonstrate and model civil dialogue so that you can bring that into your own conversations. Our goal is to tamper down the heat, to abate the anger, and to recede from hate. Instead, we hope to inspire curiosity, to foster compassion, and offer real solutions for constructive communication. So, let's all agree to be candid while also being respectful of everyone's views. We're also a little more interactive this year. We're featuring in the audience Q &A in the last 30 minutes a catch box. This is a microphone that we are literally tossing back and forth throughout the audience. We'll have two student volunteers who will be moderating that discussion and throwing that microphone to you. So, please offer your questions when they offer to throw it to you. I'd also like to mention that this year is also new for our Voices of the Divide Audio Essay Contest. This is a contest that, for students that examines the impact of a nation divided. Do

you think that America has become more polarized? Have you ever felt marginalized? How has the experience shaped your own life and the lives of those around you? With support from UD's library, The Writing Center, and other units on campus we're, we've got everything you need to put together a high quality audio essay including the audio workshop at the library tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. And, yes, there are cash prizes for this competition. But let's get to tonight. Our speaker is a radio journalist who spent two years reporting on the campaign trail in 2016, for the 2016 election. She joined NPR's political team to focus on the intersection of demographics in the campaign. She attended rallies for nearly every presidential candidate on both sides of the aisle, crisscrossed the country to hear from voters particularly in key battleground and swing states. She told the stories of voters and tried to understand the issues that were driving them to vote or not to vote a certain way in the election. Asma Khalid often uses census data and polls to dig into demographic trends and travelled across the country to hear from voters all across the, the, the nation. She is also a founding member of the very popular NPR Politics Podcast. Prior to the election Asma reported on a range of stories including the Boston Marathon bombings and the trial of James "Whitey" Bulger. After the election, Asma drew attention with her essay "What It Was Like to Cover the Election as a Muslim" where she described public reaction as she traveled the country talking to all kinds of voters. Asma is now back in Boston working for WBUR where after witnessing technology's affects on policy and politics she leads a new tech team exploring the innovation economy. She's also working on piloting a new tech podcast with NPR's Silicon Valley reporter. Please join me in giving a great big Blue Hen welcome to Asma Khalid.

AUDIENCE: [Applause].

MS. KHALID: So, thank you for that kind introduction and, and thank you all for coming out -- oh, is that me or --

DR. HOFFMAN: That was --

MS. KHALID: Oh. So, I have some brief comments that I just love to give you all a sense of, of who I am and the work that I was doing and then, you know, we can dive into a, a broader conversation. I think one of the things that's really helpful in understanding who I was in covering the campaign is also understanding a little bit about where I come, come from. I grew up in Indiana in a relatively small town. It's called Crown Point. To give you a sense of what Indiana, and in particular what Crown Point is like, the old county courthouse in our town has the Ten Commandments engraved outside and that's just the way things are, the way things have been. You know, recently I was discussing with some friends that I remember a distinct lunchtime conversation where there were a bunch of Catholic girls and a bunch of girls who are Evangelical and one or the other started telling the other one that they were going to go to hell. And I remember just looking at the outside and, and nobody really said anything to me because being Muslim in our town was to be honest somewhat of a nonfactor. This was all before September 11th. And so, the, the environment that I grew up in everybody had a faith. That was very normal. In fact, I think if someone would've come out and, and openly professed to not believe in God, to say that they were an atheist that would have been extraordinarily controversial at that time. So, given the fact that everybody did have a faith, being Muslim was not really, was not really a point of division, right? In our town, I think in some ways, it was an extraordinarily normal thing. Everybody just knew that we believed in a God, it just wasn't exactly their God, and they didn't really know too much about

it. So that's sort of the preface that I'd love to have you all understand where I'm coming from. This town is also in the shadow of the steel mills. It's in Lake County, Indiana. To give you a sense of how Indiana voted this year, all but four counties in the state went for Donald Trump. So it is a heavily conservative, a deeply red state traditionally speaking. So I want to fast forward a little bit to 9-11, and I know I was speaking with some students who, who told me that they were barely old enough to remember when 9-11 happened. I, I was a senior in high school and again, it was really no big blip. You know, it's funny now to look at that moment in time as being a really sort of divisive point because if you look back at both how the President handled that situation as well as how I, I think many of us who are Muslim felt we were extraordinarily I, I think kindly treated by our neighbors. We had grown up in the same small town our whole lives. And so, again, it was really no big blip. So then I fast-forward many years to, to 2016. I was hired on to, to help cover the campaign for National Public Radio and I was specifically brought on; my, my editor had this idea that instead of having reporters cover just a specific candidate, she would have reporters cover, cover topics. So, I had a reporter who, a colleague, who was looking at tech and politics. My beat was demographics and politics and so the goal was essentially to look at fissures. Right? These could be along race, age, education levels, ethnicity, and religion. And I would crisscross the country. I would meet people in all different kinds of places, sometimes at rallies, sometimes at diners, sometimes at churches; just wherever they may be. And that was the goal of the reporting that I did. It was, I think, a job in the beginning that I signed up for that I didn't entirely understand what the election of 2016 was going to become and the, the sort of cleavages that it would expose in who we are as a country. I

signed up to cover the election before Donald Trump had actually announced his candidacy -- I know because campaign coverage starts so far in advance so, I was already a part of the job at that point. And, I would say it probably took me until after the Nevada caucuses, so let's say February, to get a sense of really how toxic things were becoming. And at that point, I, I was just too heavily invested to quit, right? I think many of us as journalists realized that it just becomes this, this event where, you know, in many ways we're driven to cover politics, right? We're driven to cover a story and, and to be a journalist and to cover this election is really in many ways the political story of a lifetime. And so, I hung around and I, I think that I, I would still do it again but I, I, I will say that it has exposed fissures in our society that we hadn't seen before. There are really two major religious divides that I saw pop up this election cycle and in my mind they're interconnected. The first category would be Muslims and the second category are Evangelicals. Evangelicals have long been a force in politics, right? Anybody who can look back at like a 90s election will speak to the power of the Evangelical vote. What was fascinating to me this election cycle is the trepidation that they initially had for the Republican nominee and the full out blown support that we subsequently saw for them to support Donald Trump on Election Day. So, I want to play some audio clips because I am an audio journalist and that'll give us a, a good chance to hear some of what I'm describing. The first religious divide that I mentioned are Muslims and this story I'm going to play takes place in Florida. I had gone specifically to look at the Democratic Party's outreach to Muslims. This may sound like, sort of, normal, you know, right? Campaigns reach out to different religious groups but actually it was quite revolutionary. Hillary Clinton was the first candidate to ever have

somebody whose specific job was Muslim outreach and I will go ahead and play this and then we will -- let me just [indiscernible].

AUDIO CLIP: There was a very public incident in the 2008 campaign when two women in headscarves were prevented by Obama volunteers from appearing behind the candidate at a campaign rally. The Obama campaign then hired a Muslim outreach director, Mazen Asbahi, a lawyer in Chicago.

“It didn’t take long for the far right to try to do some negative research. They made a guilt by association attack.”

Critics tied Asbahi to a controversial Imam in the Chicago area and within three weeks of his appointment Asbahi had to resign. Now Asbahi says the country has changed.

“The type of guilt by association attacks that were made about me today would be brushed aside.”

And, Keith Ellison agrees.

“Seven Muslims addressed the delegates at the Democratic National Convention. Never before have we seen any in either 2008 or ’12 with any Muslims on the dais at all.”

The Congressman says that before this election anti Muslim rhetoric was coming from what he calls haters. Now it’s coming from the GOP presidential nominee.

“What I see this as is the Democratic Party saying, hold on, wait a minute, this is not a phase, you know? We, we must confront this intolerance.”

And perhaps one side affect of Donald Trump’s rise is that the Democratic Party can now publically embrace Muslims. Asma Khalid, NPR News.

MS. KHALID: That was a longer clip but the reason I wanted to play that is, you heard right at the beginning I reference an incident that happened in 2008.

So I don't know how many of you all might remember this but President Obama had a really delicate relationship actually with Islam, particularly when he was running in 2008, and he did hire the guy in my story that I mentioned, Mazen Asbahi, he was hired literally for three weeks to be President Obama's Muslim Outreach Director but had to very quickly resign because of the political climate. So to me one of the very interesting side effects of this election cycle was that there was finally, really because it had never happened before, a deliberate outreach from the Democratic Party to reach out to Muslims. You also heard there Keith Ellison, he's a Muslim congressman from Minnesota, and he references the fact that this year at the DNC, this past 2016 election there were seven Muslims speaking. Again, really unprecedented that that hadn't happened, that to be Muslim particularly during the Obama years given the sort of delicate balance President Obama had to sort of walk, I think given some of the misperceptions about who he was, Muslims were not really often given any political, political megaphones you should say. So to me this is something that was an interesting consequence of what happened, right? We saw President Trump talk about a travel ban and, and speak about Muslims in, in many ways I would say honestly in somewhat of a derogatory tone and the Clinton campaign saw this as an opportunity to jump and court Muslims. And we can talk about this later, but some people would actually argue that that was a really unwise and not politically savvy decision for her to make and that by doing that she further alienated some voters given the fact that Muslims are about only one percent of the population. Whether or not that was a politically smart move, I don't know, but you could argue, you know, morals and politics don't always align. The other thing I mentioned to you all as a group that was very interesting to me in terms of

the religious divide that we saw this election cycle and then the religious divide that we continued to see after the election is how Evangelical voters decided to really come behind Donald Trump. And I mention this because I recall interviewing women in Ohio, specifically after the incidents where Donald Trump was accused of, of sexually assaulting women and many of the women I spoke to at that time who are Republican, who are conservative, expressed really deep reservations about President Trump's moral behavior and whether or not he was really the right moral leader particularly given their own personal faith backgrounds. I then revisited a lot of these women leading up to the election, probably I'd say three weeks before the election, and what amazed me was how many of them had decided that regardless of what they saw as his questionable moral behavior he was still better than the other choice. And for some people they had actually come around full circle. The group in which I found this the most interesting actually were among Latino Evangelicals. We, throughout the campaign, had kept hearing that, you know, Hispanic voters were not going to vote for Donald Trump given the rhetoric that we heard about Latino voters as he said. And, I think I was guilty of that as well. Like a lot of people I sort of believed what the pollsters said, and, and believed what I had been hearing. But then the election happened and we realized that about a quarter of Hispanics did vote according to the exit polls for Donald Trump. And a lot of that support did come down to religious communities. And so I did this piece, and we'll just play a snippet of it here, where we hear from some Evangelical voters particularly in Florida.

AUDIO CLIP: The truth is a substantial number of Hispanics voted for Trump. Meet Pastor Mario Bramic [sp.]

"For most Latinos, not only Hispanic Evangelical, family values are important, social values are important."

He's an Evangelical minister who was a Trump surrogate.

"There was this real skew towards religious liberties in the last eight years of the Obama administration. And, Mr. Trump said, you guys are losing your right to speak, and he said if I become President you will have your right to speak like everybody else."

Trump did make an effort to reach out to Latino conservative Christians. Both of his sons visited Hispanic congregations that final Sunday before the election and it paid off.

"I ended up voting for Donald Trump."

That's Joseph Adorno [sp.]. He's a millennial, 23 years old, and an engineer in Florida. And for him a vote for Trump was essentially a vote for party loyalty and Christian values.

"I guess it's more about the, the Republican Party in a way. You know, the person that was going to be elected would nominate a lot of people in power like the judges and I felt that he would nominate more conservative judges."

MS. KHALID: Right, so, I mean Joseph Adorno to me is so interesting given, I think both just his logic but also because I had met Joseph earlier on in the campaign. He was a big Marco Rubio supporter. I met him at a church in Orlando, a Spanish-speaking congregation, and he was deeply, deeply troubled by how Donald Trump spoke about immigrants at that point in time. He's Puerto Rican. And I really wanted to call him lately and see what he thinks but I have not checked in with him. And yet, for him it was his faith that drew him to Donald

Trump and the reason I mention both the sort of cleavaging of, you know, Muslims aligning with the Democratic Party and then also the shift that we're seeing with Evangelicals wrapping really their arms around Donald Trump was to me that these are divides that were really crystallized this election cycle. So, Muslims are a really small percentage. Right? Nobody has really quantitatively looked at how they vote. It's really hard to do. But, anecdotally people will say that prior to 9-11 Muslims were staunchly Republican. They were quite conservative. They aligned largely speaking with, with the Republican Party on social values. And, in this election cycle the, the early polling that we saw, you know, whatever it is on, on Muslims, indicates that an overwhelming majority of them did vote for Hillary Clinton. And, that sort of solidifying a way, and you could argue a lot of that was already happening, right, during the war on terror years under President Bush and, and then sort of deepened to be a Democrat under President Obama, but that to me was a really interesting crystallization. And then on the other side we see a president for whom his morals raised a lot of red flags for the Evangelical voters but ultimately, again, if the polling is to be, you know, believed here they it seems came out and supported him more than they came out and supported Mitt Romney which to me is just a really interesting situation of how we see different faith communities rallying behind, you know, different, different communities. So those we can talk more about if you all have questions but I, I think part of why those two divides really interested me is I grew up in a community in which many people I knew are, are Evangelical, were Evangelical and I was Muslim. And those divides did not exist in my mind growing up, nor I would say if I were to speak to most of my friends did they exist in my reality. And yet they were probably the two starker religious divides I saw

in this election cycle. And at the end of the campaign I actually wrote about this and, and also did a voice interview with one of our "All Things Considered" hosts and it was probably the most honest and authentic reflection on the campaign that I think I did during my two years in, two years on the race. So I'd like to play a couple of clips from there.

AUDIO CLIP: "But in the last year and a half that hasn't been the case."

This is Audie Cornish, one of our hosts.

 "[Indiscernible] ... the presidential campaign and she also wears a headscarf. On Twitter she dealt with constant abuse and religious epithets and all around the country as she spoke to voters and went to rallies she noticed people treated her differently than the other reporters."

MS. KHALID: Oops. Do we end there? All right. Let's try to play the next one. Let's if we get it.

AUDIO CLIP: But other times the reactions were openly hostile. You know, I went door to door with a canvas group -- Working America, they're affiliated with the AFLCIO so they had supported Hillary Clinton -- and they were in this white working class neighborhood in South Columbus and, and we got to this one house where we met this middle-aged woman who opened the door. She started talking to the canvasser, and mind you in all of these interactions I'm kind of the fly on the wall, I'm silent, and --

Right, I've done those as well --

Yeah.

-- but you're standing to the side with your microphone -- I'm standing to the side.

-- aiming it at both the person at the door who has rung the

doorbell --

Totally.

-- and the person who opens up the door.

Exactly.

And what happens next?

And her mother comes outside."

"And you need to get off of my property." "Mom --"

And, she started yelling at, at us. I shouldn't say even at us because it was directed towards me.

"I'm not going inside. This is my property and she needs to get off." "Mom, they came here to talk to me. She's not in the best of moods today."

In this moment there were two of us. There was canvasser who was a young white woman who was asking the questions and me. And the woman who was actually answering the questions, she was very apologetic for her mother's behavior. She sort of hushed her mom back indoors but as the canvassing interaction went on I could hear her mother still in the background.

"[Indiscernible] you're on my front porch. [Indiscernible]."

"I'm sorry."

And you heard her in the background saying there's a Muslim on my property and this is even more ridiculous and she was just so upset.

MS. KHALID: And I had audio tape of the whole interaction because when you go door to door canvassing as an audio reporter you run your mike. You're like a fly on the wall but it was rolling and recording. And, I came back with that audio tape and I didn't do anything with it. We talked about it for a while in the

newsroom of what I should do with it and I came down to the ultimate decision that I don't want to air this audio tape until after the election is over. I don't think it would have persuaded anybody. I don't think it would've given them any insights into anything. But ultimately I wanted to, and, and I wrote this essay because people have often talked, you know, on post mortems about the election, about what the motivating factors were, and, and, and about, I, I guess I should say the, the influence or the force, the power, let's say, of the economy, right, as a motivating factor. The economy was no doubt a huge influence and the fear of job displacement is and remains a huge force but I didn't want it to be that years from now when we read about things in history books that people will be able to ignore the sense that there was also a very, very real sense of a religious divide in our country at this moment. And I think that I worried because I also knew what the other journalists, you know, on the bus looked like. We were not an extraordinarily diverse cast of characters. And so I also knew if I didn't write something it would be far easier for people years from now to pretend like the motivating factors had everything to do with the economy and very little to do with the deep fear that really I think at this point in time does exist in our country largely I would say from one community about Muslims though there are other religious divides as well. And so I wanted this to be a part of the historical record that we would always have. So, I will end it there because I'm sure that everyone has questions, but thank you all very much.

AUDIENCE: [Applause].

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. So, I have a few questions from our students, our National Agenda students that actually met with you earlier today. There's a class associated with the speaker series so the students actually get a really

one-on-one experience with the speakers. Pardon me. I do want to point out that we are on Twitter if you want to join the conversation. I have my teaching assistant Phoebe, I'm not sure where she is, but she is keeping track of the Twitter feed if you want to ask a question. The last 30 minutes of this conversation will be a Q&A from the audience as well as from Twitter. I, I like to look at Twitter and how people communicate on Twitter so I have a tweet from you up here. This is after the recent Boy Scout Jamboree; I think that was at the end of the summer. And I think this tweet from you stuck with me because you're a Midwestern girl. Like, you were a Girl Scout and you say in Girl Scout's we just sold cookies and sang songs about making new friends but keeping the old, what was that like to experience this, this, the aftermath of this Boy Scout thing as a Midwesterner as well as being a Muslim?

MS. KHALID: I think that it was akin to in many ways the disconnect I felt covering the entire election. Right? Because people often talked this election about understanding Middle America. You'd always hear this around East Coast newsrooms. And I'd sort of laugh and I'd be like well who's in Middle America? Like, I'm from Middle America. Do you, do you just sort of pretend like people like me don't exist? Like, we are part and parcel of that. And I understand that the narrative is easier. It's easier to digest if all you think about are sort of white working class voters. But, but it's, it is more complex, right? And many of us have relationships with the very people that you're thinking about as sort of the traditional white working class voters in, in Middle America. And I've often thought that, you know, I don't know that the reporting I did during the campaign would have been as insightful, and to be honest, maybe as honest, if I hadn't been astute, if I hadn't grown up in the Midwest. Right? Like if I had only, if I

was Muslim but I had grown up in, I don't know, Chicago or New York City arguably my experience would have been very different. And in this election cycle we saw two huge trends, right? We saw an economic trend around job displacement and, and quote unquote middle America but then we also saw a huge religious divide and I think in many ways I was equipped to understand both and I like to think that it was a, a huge asset, sort of a superpower.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I had a lot of questions from my students had to deal with the fact that you are both female and Muslim. Do you, how do you think your experience as a journalist during the election was different because not only you are Muslim but you're a female Muslim --

MS. KHALID: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: Sarah asks, she says I can imagine just from your piece on NPR that you mentioned earlier, it was difficult enough being Muslim when people were afraid of you and potentially judging you but did you feel as being a woman as well caused people to have a more narrowed view of you and your abilities as you were --

MS. KHALID: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- trying to do your job?

MS. KHALID: It's really interesting. I've often thought being a Muslim woman is less threatening to be honest and I don't know, I'd love to hear if other people agree with this assessment, but I often think that if you're petite enough, if you can speak a certain way, you can come across as non-threatening to many of the voters that I would be talking to. I often think if I had -- my brother is 6'4", he's really big, he looks like a football player, I was like he should not be out there interviewing people. Like he would just, by body language, would threaten

people more. And he also has a slight beard, you know? So in many ways I thought that that played to my benefit. It's hard for me to fully understand, I think, the gender dimension in this equation because the Muslim factor was so much more inflammatory towards me. Right? Like, it's hard for me to separate those two. I know that there was a lot of focus this election cycle on what people call the girls on the, the girls on the van, or the girls on the bus because Hillary Clinton had so many female reporters covering her this election cycle. And I would often fill in especially towards the end of the campaign for our main Hillary reporter. But whenever I was doing that there was only one other woman that I would see who is African American. I mean, none, none of us were particularly diverse. And, I remember a distinct moment where I was covering Hillary Clinton at an African American church and I looked around at the other reporters in the room and I was the person with the darkest skin among the journalists and, and that to me is, is a problem as we sort of, you know, try to, to tell better stories because the election is about choosing our next leader and if the journalists in the room don't really look like America that concerns me. And so I guess it's hard for me to understand fully the gender dynamic which many of my colleagues did speak about because the Muslim dynamic was often the first and sometimes the only thing that people saw.

DR. HOFFMAN: It trumped the gender dynamic --

MS. KHALID: Correct. Correct.

DR. HOFFMAN: Another tweet you had somewhat recently was in relation to a news story that came out that said, this person said a real mystery is how those with such strong racial resentment voted for Obama in the first place and you said I've met voters like this and have known many more. They might like Asma,

the one Muslim in front of them but hate Muslims as a whole. What was that experience like traveling across the country and having a lot of Americans open their arms to you but directly say to you that they don't trust or believe in Muslim Americans?

MS. KHALID: So, I don't think that anyone would ever say, to me at least, that they don't trust Muslim Americans. I would've loved to have had a more honest conversation on that front but I don't know that they would. They often would point out that they believed that we should not have Muslim immigration, for example. Or the travel ban was a really good idea because it would prevent other Muslims from coming in but those are the bad Muslims. I was at a Trump volunteer training session in Florida and I met a man there who, who told me that he thought the Muslim ban would be really good for Muslims like me. And I said, well how do you, you know, what, what are you thinking. I was like, please, you know, explain more. And he said, well you know, it'll protect the good ones like you because if another bad one comes in here and commits a terrorist attack Americans are going to go crazy, there will be internment camps, and this way you'll be protected. And, it's a really interesting logic. Strangely enough I sort of followed it and I was like this is really interesting. But I also was very curious how he decided I was one of the good ones. You know, we had been talking for 15 or 20 minutes. I, you know, dressed in whatever dress I was wearing, you know, outfit, and to me it was always really interesting how quickly people felt comfortable with you who did have negative opinions about Muslims. In some ways I find that extraordinarily uplifting that like humanity can be, you know, sort of the power of humans to relate to one another still exists. But in other ways I also thought, well, gosh, that's sort of depressing because like Muslims are only

one percent of the population. You can't go on a goodwill tour across the whole country. But I would say it, it's, I mean, look it happens. It happens even, I think, among people that we know from childhood. I grew up in Indiana so there are people that I know who did vote for Trump, who supported Trump, but who I know, you know, appreciate and, and love our family. They've just been able to disconnect that our family has anything to do with the rhetoric that, that President Trump has said about Muslims.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, speaking of President Trump, a question we got from Twitter from Ann is, you know, of course you attended some Trump rallies as part of your reporting, did you ever feel threatened and what was that experience like?

MS. KHALID: Did I feel threat, threatened at a Trump rally? I don't know that I personally ever felt threatened at a Trump rally. The journalists would generally be cordoned off in an area -- some people call it the pen -- but, ah, you're basically in a secure zone, right? Um, people would jeer and say things, you know, at the, at the press but I don't think I ever felt extraordinarily unsafe. There are things that I did that I had learned. I'd, long story short, I'd gone on some former reporting assignments before [indiscernible] hostile zones so I had learned certain things which is that you wear one headphone on, one headphone off to always be aware of your surroundings. I did that all the time when I walked in the crowds at rallies just so that you know who's behind you and who's around you. So, I found myself doing things like that. But I'd wade, I waded into crowds. I mean, I didn't seem, seem to think that was a problem. This was earlier on when they allowed you to wade into crowds. And as the campaign season went off it was harder for journalists to get out. But, I often found that people at Trump

rallies would often be eager to speak with me. You know, we could all hypothesize about why that's the case but, um, I found them really wanting to talk to me. Sometimes I would get invitations. They would like to invite me to their home or to their boat for the weekend which did not happen to all my colleagues so that was real interesting. And, the, the last thing I want to say about the rallies is, I do think there was a genuine change in temperament from the beginning of a rally to the end of a rally. Like Trump was really able to galvanize the crowd and energize them. And you could see this. I mean it was really sort of mind-boggling. I would often interview people before a rally for that reason because people would just be calmer and sort of waiting in line chit chatting. But throughout the rally he would really sort of like, you know, it was almost like a call and response. He would yell something out and they would yell something back. You know, lock her up, and then, and it would just get the, the entire sort of like temperature in the room, right, metaphorically speaking, speaking would rise, and I think people at the end of the rally therefore would feel more emotional. But that being said, I think the only times I felt unsafe were, were sometimes when I was going out on my own because I did a lot of work where I was going out to smaller settings to interview people, right, like county meetings or parks, diners, public places. And so, towards the end of the campaign I, probably after the summer, after the conventions, I started asking for a reporter, or, or sorry, a producer to travel with me. And so I traveled with a producer, usually with a male producer, and I think that was partly for safety but also candidly he is from North Carolina and has a southern accent and I think that as a team we were just a more convincing team when we met voters. So.

DR. HOFFMAN: That's interesting because our last speaker had a North

Carolina accent --

MS. KHALID: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: I think we were all sort of, we all sort of fell in love with.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, maybe it was just me.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

DR. HOFFMAN: I'd like to point out; we have done some polling around your visit which is asking Americans, this is a national survey that the Center for Political Communication conducted, looking at how Americans perceive Muslims in America. We asked about whether Muslims are portrayed fairly in the media, whether you have any personal friends who are Muslim. We had a number of questions and I think this one stood out to me because we asked pre-struck language. We asked very clearly, do you think, do you see Muslims more as them or as us? And, this is the kind of language that I think we don't like to use in civil discourse.

MS. KHALID: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: We like to say, let's open this up a little bit more. But I was curious as to what would happen if we ask this for a representative group of Americans. This is just last week and nearly three quarters of Americans viewed Muslims as more them --

MS. KHALID: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- than us. What is your response to them?

MS. KHALID: So, I don't know that I have much to respond to, right? And, in part I guess this goes back to the fact that, like, this, this has never been an internal debate for me, right? Like, I don't really even know what them and us

means entirely, right? Like, I, I have felt constantly American and -- and we can talk more about this, I mentioned this to your class of students -- I recognize I have a somewhat unique immigrant experience because my mother did not immigrate here. My grandparents immigrated here. And so, they have a, an experience that is very singularly tied to the city of Chicago during the 1960s. And my grandfather was a very dark skinned man and my grandmother was a very light-skinned woman. And so, the stories that I feel about the civil rights, you know, and particularly because my grandfather then befriended many people who were black and Muslim in Chicago in the 60s is so connected to the experience of being Muslim in America that it is very different than an immigrant experience. So that being said, I recognize that my experience is probably a little bit different. But, whenever I see polls, you know, sort of akin to this -- I think Pew has also done some similar type of polling -- I often think, like, this is a question that I think non-Muslims have to wrestle with, right? Like, I don't know that I can do anything to make somebody feel more comfortable especially because I'm not having this internal debate. It seems that many Americans are having this internal debate, right, about like who gets to be an American, what does being an American mean. But I think for me that's like a resolved question already. And so, I know that that's probably not what you all wanted to hear to just throw the question back at everyone but I think that is a question. I mean, and I, I candidly said that to some of my colleagues. You know, at the end of the election cycle they were very bothered because they had systematically seen how I had been treated and, and dealt with on the campaign and I flat out said to one of them, I go, yes, but you know -- because she had told me about one of her uncle's or something -- I said, yeah, but you have the opportunity to say

something to Uncle So-and-So. You know, I don't have an Uncle So-and-So who feels that way about Muslims. So, you have the opportunity to do something, I think that much more a constructive conversation for you to have than for me to have.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, and I, I'll, I'll end with this is "Your Life" sort of tweet segment here.

MS. KHALID: Oh my God.

DR. HOFFMAN: Referring basically to what you just said that --

MS. KHALID: Oh.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- your grandfather immigrated to a highly segregated Chicago in 1962 and the first Muslims he met were black. So, you have a truly American experience in terms of, you know, I mean my, my great grandparents came here from Finland and Germany and it's, it's, you have a, a kind of a true American story yet still people look at you sometimes and don't understand your background. So I just, I, I, I understand you're saying like it's some, it's partly on, on white Americans I think to try and understand our history but what suggestions might you have for a starting point for understanding Islam, for understanding Muslim Americans and their experience?

MS. KHALID: So I think one of the things that is helpful and, and I don't know that it's portrayed this way by, you know, many mainstream media outlets; it's just the sheer percentage of American Muslims who are black. I think this is a convenient part of the conversation that is ignored for a whole variety of reasons. But, you know, I, I'm in Boston now and, and one of my dear best friends, she's a, um, a very different and I should say she's a professor at Harvard. Long story short, she is a African American and Muslim and I, I just often thought, like, this is

such a strange divide that people have, that they can't seem to understand that there are people whose lineage goes back to the very founding of this country who were brought here as slaves who were Muslim. I mean, that is the historical fact. And, you know, for many years some of them didn't practice Islam. That's, you know, but then many of them did become Muslim again say at the, you know, earlier part of the century. I was in Iowa and I think it's in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and there's a mosque, I believe it's in Cedar Rapids, that is known to be like one of the earliest mosques in the U.S. that dates back to, I don't know, the, sort of early 1900s and to me it's always so interesting -- I, I understand that a large chunk of the Muslim population is, is newer to this country but I also think it's a convenient fact to ignore the idea that there had been Muslims that had been a part of the conversation for a really long time. You know, I, I highlighted a, a piece earlier here from Keith Ellison. So when Keith Ellison was sworn into Congress he was sworn into Congress on the Koran that Thomas Jefferson has. I mean, Thomas Jefferson had the Koran and was reading it because there were already interactions with Muslims at that point in time. And, I don't know, I think maybe if we can all recognize that, that Muslims have been a part of our history in our country that it would be a little bit less scary for folks who see this as an imminent threat taking over the country. The other thing I would say, and I mentioned this in the class earlier, is that, you know, a lot of people say they don't know a Muslim but I would venture to say many of you all might have passed Muslims and you don't know because we don't all dress the same way. You know, like we don't all wear headscarves. I mentioned to someone earlier in the classes, you know, I have two sisters, one doesn't wear a headscarf, one does, and her name, the older one is Noreen. You know, I don't know that

anybody walking on the street would know that she's Muslim.

DR. HOFFMAN: And she, you said she dresses like a Kardashian.

MS. KHALID: She looks like a Kardashian but she dresses really well too.

And, and I think what's so interesting about this is just the idea that, you know, it's, it's not, it's, it's really difficult I think for folks to wrap their head around the idea that there can be different levels of like religiosity. I want to bring up one other quick example. I, you know, I was at NPR I have a, I have a good friend who is, he used to work at NPR with me, he's Muslim. And, he is, he is gay. He wrote an Op-Ed actually in the The New York Times about being game and Muslim after the Orlando shooting and it to me is interesting because it was always hard for people just because him and I had a different, I would say like, religiosity, right -- he very much identifies as being Muslim -- for people to wrap their heads around the idea that he could be Muslim. And I distinctly remember someone asking me once in the newsroom, oh, what, what is he and I go, what do you mean? And they said, oh, like, is he Muslim? And I sort of laughed at that idea because I was like no one would go around questioning the Christianity of our fellow coworkers. It's such a, a laughable idea in the, in the newsroom. And so to me, I, I guess I just would also encourage you all to -- you know, for, and I can speak I guess more specifically about being Muslim, right? It's harder for me to talk about religious divides from the other end because I have not grown up in an Evangelical household. But when it comes to, to Muslim identity I think one of the things that is really helpful is for folks to realize that there is a lot of diversity within the Islamic faith itself and the practice and the religiosity and there are many different kinds of Muslims and you may know more Muslims than you think, you know? There are Muslims who are basketball players. There are

Muslims who are actors and they are a part of American life already. I think sometimes it's just a little convenient to pretend like those Muslims aren't there.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well before I literally toss it to the audience, and I'll ask for Sirandou and Katie, wherever you two might be, if you're going to help us again, I hope. And in the production booth, if you can get that catch box ready. But, the theme of this series as well as the class and the readings that my students are, are delving into in class is about the divisiveness that the nation faces today. So, Andrew asks a pretty broad question. But, what do you think is the biggest divide, biggest; I like the word fissure --

MS. KHALID: Fissure.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- biggest divide that we're facing today?

MS. KHALID: That's so hard, gosh. Perhaps a divide that -- I mean, it's so hard because I think, like, given where you are in the country certain divides seem more salient than others. Right? I, I honestly don't know. I mean, there were moments this election where I personally feel like the biggest divide we will see at times is going to be across socioeconomic lines, but, I feel like right now poor white people and poor black people don't even seem like they have a common agenda. So, I mean, like right, there's little agreement, there's little agreement in how they voted this election cycle, but I do think, like, as we seen greater income inequality that is going to become a fissure but whether or not people vote in similar ways or see themselves on the same side will be interesting. I think right now one of the biggest divides is along racial lines and I didn't want to say that because I feel like that is, is such like a constant refrain, right; like it has been a divide in our country for so long. But, I say that in part because in meeting with voters often times I think one of the interesting things

about being, about being I guess at least the skin color that I am or being Muslim is that I never really fit into, into conversations where everyone was white or where everyone was black, but sometimes I think I got really interesting insights from both communities and then realized that people don't understand where the other person is coming from. And I, I worry that even when we look at the conversations right now around the National Anthem and the NFL that, you know, some people are having a really hard time understanding where the other person is coming from. And I think without empathy it's really hard to bridge a divide, right? And people often point to gay marriage and say oh well look at how the country has changed on gay marriage. And I think that's a totally, totally different equation because at the end of the day people realize that, you know, different family members of theirs are gay. It's much more difficult because we as a society are not that integrated that we have, you know, black and brown grandchildren everywhere you're at. So, I think it's still far more foreign for people.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I'm glad you brought the idea of empathy up because one of our students, Bailey, before I toss it again -- literally -- to the audience, how do we teach empathy? How do we model empathy? How do we demonstrate empathy?

MS. KHALID: How do you teach empathy? I don't know. I mean, I honestly I don't know. I, I would love some guidance on that front. I, I sometimes wonder if you, if that is like an innate trait. That is a really, what's the right word for that, like depressed, there is another word, fatalist, right --

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

MS. KHALID: -- attitude I think to have but a part of me does wonder. And

I say that in part because after the election I interviewed a couple of people -- it's a really interesting story -- who connected through a social media platform, one Trump voter, one Clinton supporter. And the guy said to me, I realized I don't have a lot of empathy. And that's just how I am. Like, I just don't understand. Like he, and he clearly wanted to so he was on this social media platform where he could connect with a different kind of voter but he just said that's who I am. Like I don't know how to be something else. And, I, I think for many of us who grew up as, as a non-majority in a community -- so in my case it was being Muslim in a very predominantly sort of white small conservative community -- we got accustomed I think to understanding because that was, that's sort of like what you have to do right? I, I said to someone earlier at, at dinner that, you know, this sounds so crud as I say it but I think it's very accurate and I heard someone else say this once so these are not my own words, is the idea that, you know, oftentimes to be a minority, and it's really to survive I think in, in some setting, you become fluent in white culture. And, I thought that was such an accurate way of describing things. That you, you understand how the world works and you understand where a lot of, you know, people are coming from in those situations but that's because you are the minority, right? And so, I don't know that for a lot of the voters I met I don't know that any of their voting decisions, regardless of how they felt, they understood that it had implications on other people's lives because they had never been forced to be in those situations. And I don't know that that can change.

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. I think that's very interesting. I think that ultimately what you're saying is, you know, for some people you're forced into an empathic position because as a minority you have to understand the --

MS. KHALID: Sure.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- people around you in order to survive, in order to --

MS. KHALID: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- compete within the groups that you're in. I think maybe the suggestion is particularly for our white students in the audience is to expose themselves to different perspectives and --

MS. KHALID: That's true. That is true. I mean, someone recently asked me -- I was speaking at a, at a high school in Massachusetts and one student asked me, she's a, an editor on the student paper -- she said well I just don't really know what's going on. I don't know what these different students are thinking. I said, well, go, and sit with different people at lunch. I go, high schools are the easiest places where you go and you sit with the same people at lunch every single day for four years and it's one of the easiest places in the world where you could switch your lunch table every single day. And, I think there's a lot of truth to that, that by exposing yourself to different types of people and different types of ideas at the very minimum you'll understand a little bit more.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right.

MS. KHALID: Hopefully it will make you more empathetic too.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. So, all right, let's open it up to the students. I'd love to hear from students who might have had experiences with visiting different parts of campus or engaging with different communities on this campus. So, let's take a question from a student first and then we'll go to a community member. How about a student question? Raise your hand if you're ready. There's one over here, Katie. There you go.

Q: That's why I'm in graduate school. I could barely catch it.

Thank you for coming. Welcome to University of Delaware.

MS. KHALID: Thank you.

Q; I wondered if we could talk a little bit, if I can get a comment from you about the recent shooting in Las Vegas --

MS. KHALID: Hum.

Q: And I've been following, of course, on social media the reaction and there seems to be a, you know, people having a go at the media in particular for refusing to come out and, and say this is terrorism when there seems to be almost an exuberance, I won't say exuberance, but there seems to be, you know, it comes out very quickly when, when people find out that, that a perpetrator is Muslim --

MS. KHALID: Hum.

Q; -- to call it terrorism. And I wonder if you could, if you could comment on that?

MS. KHALID: Someone asked me a similar question in the class earlier today where I spoke and I mentioned that one of the things that I think makes our job as journalists very challenging is that as news comes out really quickly we rely on, on federal law enforcement officials, right? And so, very often that's the case of the FBI or the Justice Department, and in this instance and in many instances to be blunt when the perpetrator is of this sort these cases are not deemed domestic terrorism by law enforcement officials. And, we as journalists I would say are more often than not sort of the carriers of the message rather than the, the folks defining the message. And, look, I agree that labels are what they are. I don't know that it's, I don't know that labeling it one thing or the other would help the conversation entirely but I understand why people feel that having

that label will feel just at the same time.

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay, thank you. Katie, do you want to toss it over here. I think we had a question over here on the aisle. All right. You can do it. Oh. Oh you guys are getting so good at this. Thank you.

Q: Do you think the tone of your interviews or the answers would have been different if you were not wearing the headscarf?

MS. KHALID: So, a few times I did not wear a headscarf because I thought that the situation was not particularly safe and that I wasn't getting honest answers and I do feel that there was a difference but that's somewhat subjective, right. I think I'd --

Q: Um-hum.

MS. KHALID: -- have to actually like test out that theory over a long term scientifically. So, it's subjective how I thought that folks responded.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. Other questions from the audience? Yeah, back here. Can you do it, Sirandou?

SIRANDOU: I'll try.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter]. It's an experiment. It works pretty well I'd have to say. Thank you.

Q: Can you hear me? Can you hear me?

DR. HOFFMAN: Yes.

MS. KHALID: Yes.

Q: My name is Mustaf Anicoy [sp.] I'm Iranian American and so you -- first of all, I'd like to admire you about your courage, your knowledge, and your progress in this society. And, my, I have couple of question if you don't mind. Number one is you must have been coming, growing up for, in a moderate

liberal-minded Muslim family.

MS. KHALID: I don't know because it's the only family I know. I will say that my family, it, it's, I don't know that it's that different than most of the other Muslim families I know but again, these are the Muslim families in Indiana so I can only really speak of that background. But, my family is religious by and large I would say.

Q: Um-hum.

MS. KHALID: My grandfather was quite actively involved in the early Muslim community in Chicago. But like I mentioned, also that community had very interesting -- you know, he knew, he knew some of the black leaders of the Muslim movement also at that point in time, right? So it was a, a different type of a Muslim community.

Q: Right.

MS. KHALID: My mother is quite religious so in terms of the sense that I would say she, she does pray every day and I think that she sort of relayed many of her religious teachings probably to us. My father is far more secular but would identify as Muslim. And this is what I was trying to say to folks, I think that Muslims come in a lot of different varieties. So my father is someone we like to joke and say -- I hope he doesn't mind this if he's -- he would say that, you know, he shows up at the holidays, right, so if you're a Muslim it's Eid. Eid, Eid, like you -- I think he would acknowledge that joke himself, you know? And, but yet, he would donate very generously to the mosque, you know, because he believes it should exist. And, he has, he very much identifies as Muslim and I would say particularly as the political climate has changed I think he, he still very strongly identifies as being Muslim.

Q: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, one follow-up question and then we'll pass it along.

Q: One --

DR. HOFFMAN: You had one follow-up?

Q: Yes. And, so my next question I, as you will show in the records of the, according the lady in the house didn't want a Muslim person on her land and did, did you feel, how did you feel deep inside what is she trying to tell you?

MS. KHALID: So I --

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

MS. KHALID: -- was relatively numb, meaning there were other moments during the campaign where I candidly did, I did cry. I did not cry in that moment. It was a completely, like, non-emotional response. We had a whole bunch of more houses to go to. I was canvassing. This happened probably a quarter of the way in to the evening where we were. Again, if you're door knocking you go like door to door. You're trying to hear what people have to say. So we had a lot more reporting to do. If I had been by myself I would have just said no thanks and walked away, but I was with the woman whose job it is to canvass, right, for this campaign. She had more questions to ask so we stayed until the job was done. Afterwards I did feel for the neighbors because this neighborhood I mentioned to you to earlier that it's in south Columbus. It's, it is a diverse neighborhood. It has, there were kids of, of a few different races playing outside, and I worried a little bit, you know, is, is this what this lady thinks about because there were two Muslim families in the neighborhood that we saw. Is this how she feels about these neighbors? And then it made me sometimes think, oh gosh,

like is this how people felt about us. I don't think that that's the case but again it sort of, it goes back to the idea that people knew us. We had lived in the same town. So, we were friendly and familiar. But it's the idea of some new person coming that is unfamiliar that is perhaps threatening. So --

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. I've got a question from Twitter. Did you ever have people on the campaign trail trying to explain your own religion to you?

MS. KHALID: Oh, yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter].

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

MS. KHALID: Yes, or very leading questions. So, with the gentleman I mentioned in Florida who, who told me why the Muslim ban would be good for Muslims, he prefaced all of this by explaining to me that he had spent a year in Cairo and he, you know, knew all about Islam. And I kept my mouth shut. I, I often didn't say anything. I mean I don't want to really get into like polemical debates with anyone. But, my background is political science and journalism but I do have a Masters in Islamic Studies from Cambridge. I also, like, somewhat theologically did study my own religion so I did not want to go there with him at that point. But, to me it was so interesting because I was being theologically explained, you know, about -- he said well you know there's some, you know, it's in their teachings, I believe he said, for them to kill. And, just for the record since we're being recorded that is not in the teachings nor is that something that I believe in but he thought that this was the case. He had studied this he said and this is what he had decided. And, and to me it was a really funny logic because I thought either you're telling me like I'm a bad Muslim because I don't believe in killing or you're telling me that, like, you know like, it was such a funny logic. Like

I'm not orthodox, I'm not a good Muslim because I'm not doing what -- he called them true believers. He says true believers believe that you have to do this. And, I just didn't really understand what that meant. Did it mean that I was like not a true believer, that I was a bad Muslim? And it's very strange to be called a bad -- I mean, imagine if you're called a bad Muslim you're called a bad Muslim by like, I don't know, a fellow like orthodox Muslim who would say that to you not, not somebody you meet at a Trump training session.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter].

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

MS. KHALID: So, yes, it happened and that's the incident in particular that kind of sticks in my mind.

DR. HOFFMAN: You, you shared something earlier about Sharia law [indiscernible] --

MS. KHALID: Oh, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- and I was wondering if you could just describe that a little bit because I think we often hear that there is a fear of the more Muslims that come to the United States --

MS. KHALID: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- we're going to start seeing Sharia law embed itself into our local and state governments. Can you explain that a little bit because I think a lot of people --

MS. KHALID: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- don't really know what that is.

MS. KHALID: So that is something that I, I mentioned that I think to one of your students earlier because she was asking me about kind of like where this

climate came around Islam. And I said what to me has been so interesting is we didn't really see this divide right after 9-11. I didn't feel it. I don't know if you all felt it. But it didn't feel this way to me. It has subsequently I think gotten way, way worse and I said a lot of it, in my mind, goes back to the fact that there are certain specific actors or agents you, I guess you could say, who have deliberately brought in legislation on a local level, right, in state legislatures after state legislatures to ban Sharia law. And I sort of always laugh when I see that because largely speaking Sharia law is like -- I, I don't even know how to explain this because this is like -- it's, it's not a codified law of any sort, right? And I sort of laugh at this idea, this is actually what my thesis was on, was that in, in the U.K. they tried to codify Islamic law when they colonized different parts of the world that was impossible, right? Like Sharia is just like guiding principles, right? It's very basic ideas about like living a moral life and ethics. And, to me I sort of always laugh because I've never ever met a Muslim who like knows exactly what Sharia is, right? It's such like an ambiguous moral code. Nor have I also, like gone -- you know, like the Ten Commandments are something that are all written out; like Sharia is not a written out thing. Like here is the ten codes of Sharia. Like, that doesn't exist. So I laugh when I hear this all the time because I was like there is no such thing as, as like a codified Sharia law that is going to make it into like the Indiana State Legislature. Like that is actually not even theologically possible. And so, that is the bigger issue. But, then secondly, I often think too it's just this idea that, that, that Muslims in the U.S. would want that to me has often been something that I struggle with because, you know, overwhelmingly at least at this point in time, you know, Muslims are voting for a Democratic Party that is very socially liberal. By and large where we see more of a desire to have

an integration of church and state generally comes from an Evangelical voter. I don't know Muslims; I, I'm sure that they exist in other countries but in the United States I don't know, nor do I see Muslims that are advocating for an integration of church and state. You can see now Muslims running, you know, for local office. They traditionally run as Democrats supporting a Democratic Party platform that may have things, to be totally blunt, in the Democratic Party platform that they are not in sync with. I don't know, I mean, I'll take one just whack at a public policy proposal for example, abortion. I'm not entirely sure where all Muslims fall on abortion. There will be some who are more orthodox who may be in line with a more conservative traditional philosophy. But I have not met people who are on the same page as the Republican Party with trying to limit abortion because I do think that at least in the United States context of Islam there has been a deep sense of separation of we could say mosque and state.

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

MS. KHALID: It's just the way it's been.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right.

MS. KHALID: Maybe it's different in other countries. I'm sure it's different in other countries but at least in the U.S. context --

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. That's interesting. Let's take another question from a student. Do we have a -- yes. Back in the middle here. You can, you can go a little closer if you want.

UNIDENTIFIED: I was trying to --

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh, are you going, were you going to try it?

UNIDENTIFIED: Go for it.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

Q: This is a lot softer than I expected.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah. Hold it down here a little bit. There you go.

Q: Okay. So, my main question, I, I -- is this good --

DR. HOFFMAN: Yes.

Q: -- for the sound? Okay. Was, why do you think in the past election cycle, the 2016, you know, the rise of the alt-right and stuff, why do you think that social conservatism especially like non, or, non-Hispanic white traditional social conservatism played, or struck a chord with more people even people who weren't white than even the economic process which, or do you think they cooperated? Like they fed off of each other?

MS. KHALID: Sorry, say that one more time?

Q: Oh, like do you think they worked or they like, they were both like interrelated?

MS. KHALID: Like race, race and immigration issues --

DR. HOFFMAN: Social issues --

Q: And economics.

MS. KHALID: Okay.

Q: Social and economic.

MS. KHALID: Yeah, yeah. Okay, I think that they played off of one another and I would say this is all just based on interviews I did with voters, right? So it is not a scientific sample by any means. But, I met voters who were from affluent circumstances from nice suburbs who were voting based more on their social principles let's say, right? Or, financial purposes in some cases. They were wealthier so they wanted certain tax reforms. And then on the flipside I did meet people who were voting because of their economic concerns. I don't know that

those two groups always overlap though in some instances they do overlap. The reason I mention this is I went back to my home county, Lake County, Indiana which is home to Gary, if you all know Gary it's the home of the Jackson Five.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter].

MS. KHALID: So --

DR. HOFFMAN: Gary, Indiana, Gary, Indiana --

MS. KHALID: I know right? But it's also a very segregated county. So where I live it was not at all like Gary but Gary is also within my county and there's a lot of steel mills. Gary is an old steel town. And I went and I interviewed people there and one of the, this was way back, this was during the primary season so it must have been like May. Whenever Indiana was quite competitive -- I think I joined them primary season, yeah. And, I remember hearing from an African man, American man who had worked in the steel mills for years. He said, oh I hear all these people talking about voting for Trump but he wasn't going to vote for Trump. But I would hear this systematically from other people from sort of similar socio-economic situations that they were in very similar economic situations, right, but you would see a difference in how a white person and a black person are voting with nearly identical economic situations sometimes working at the exact same jobs. And that's why I think when people consistently point to economics only I feel like it's a very unsatisfying explanation.

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. Oh, good. My mike's working. I thought it wasn't working. Let's take maybe one more question. Over here. Katie? We might have time for two more.

KATIE: [Indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah. Towards the middle of the back on the right there.

KATIE: [Indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: Go for it.

Q: We've heard; heard you speak about the divides that have, that you identified in 2016. We also know of Louis Farrakhan and the Muslim community yet we never heard anything from the Muslim community especially from his point of view because he had the Million Man March down in Washington --

MS. KHALID: You're talking about the Nation of Islam then, right?

Q: Right.

MS. KHALID: The black Muslim, the Nation of Islam. Okay, because that's not --

Q: Right.

MS. KHALID: -- mainstream. Yeah.

Q: So, did that community not want to participate in being vocal for fear of --

MS. KHALID: So, the Nation --

Q: -- backlash or --

MS. KHALID: I don't know. I mean, look, I don't know. I will say that the Nation is much smaller than it used to be. This is like a broader theological thing but like a quick nutshell history. There was Malcolm X then there was Elijah Muhammad. Elijah Muhammad's son, Warith Deen -- who's actually the gentleman I was referring to that knows my grandfather very well -- Warith Deen left the Nation of Islam and many people who are black left the Nation of Islam as well at that point in time. So the Nation is not like the Nation that it used to be. That being said, Louis Farrakhan is still like, you know, a, a voice and whatnot.

He, to my knowledge the only thing I ever heard him say was supportive of Trump I thought but do not quote me because I don't recall actually hearing much about him.

DR. HOFFMAN: But basically the Nation of Islam --

MS. KHALID: But he was like a non-figure I would say.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- is different?

MS. KHALID: Nation of Islam is different. If you all have ever seen the movie Malcolm X, at the end of the movie Denzel Washington, he goes for Haj and that's like a point in his life where he sort of shifted and became what you would call a traditional Sunni Muslim. And there was a large sort of splintering around that time where both Elijah Muhammad's son and Malcolm X became mainstream Muslim. So I don't know, to be honest, I know very, very little, next to nothing about like the Nation of Islam at all. Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. Thank you. I think we have time for another question. Oh, yeah. Professor Biddle.

Q: I'm going to squeeze in two. First of all I thought your doing the story on being a Muslim covering the campaign was a great thing to do. And I'd love to hear what went into that decision from your colleagues, from your bosses, why you chose to do it after the campaign was over; whether you had any opposition. And the other one is, you mentioned how that woman trying to throw you off her property that that was not a time that you cried but there were other times that were so bad that you did. I'd love to hear what those were.

MS. KHALID: Sure. Um, I don't even remember, to be honest, why I cried at certain times. I wish I could tell you. It's probably just a built up like frustration when you are like sleepless nights and on the road and filing a lot of stories. I

don't know what they were all about. No, I take that back. There was one I do remember. Okay. So, this was something that is like a new term to me but maybe you students, young kids know this word, "gaslighting," which apparently is when you are trolled with like fake information and it makes you sort of like question your own reality. This is my understanding of the term. Is that what [indiscernible] --

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, it's from the old like black and white movie.

MS. KHALID: Oh, okay. So it was a new word to me. But, I was often trolled on social media, right? Or I'd often be maligned and I would just block, delete, mute, whatever. But, I was at an airport in North Carolina, in Charlotte, and I had to go to the bathroom really badly and asked the server if I could just leave. I was like sitting, it was a very fancy like airport dining restaurant; I had just like not eaten all day, I just wanted to grab something and so there's a sit-down meal. I said can I just leave my bag right here. I'm just going to go to the bathroom. And she said, yeah, no problem. There was a couple next to me that seemed on edge ever since I sat down, just the body language. Anyhow they leave eventually, they pay, and the server comes over to me and she says, oh, like I'm surprised they didn't say anything to you. They reamed into me basically when, you know, whatever; when you, I left, let you like leave your bag, right? And so, we talked about it and sort of made, you know, oh, yeah, like why, why they did that whatever, you know. And, and so long story short, I left her a pretty nice tip and then I tweeted about that, it happened. And I used to use Twitter a lot to just document things that happened because I didn't journal, I never journaled frequently enough, and I couldn't, like, none of this stuff is important for stories but to me, like, -- and this is where sometimes you do think that stuff is in

your head -- is that I often used to tell my editors the way that I'm treated in certain places is one of the most interesting indicators to me of like how what we'll see with like voting. It's just something. And it's something that's unique. It's not something that all of my other colleagues got to experience. So I would just like document it on Twitter. Put a little thing. And then I said like major props to this waitress, she was great. Anyhow, this man comes after me on Twitter, says I was sitting right behind you the entire time; you made it all up, da da da da; you should come after your bosses. And it got so bad, he kept going. I muted him. My, actually one of my colleagues Dominico got involved which often happens that my colleagues would get involved with the trolls. And, I then started like so questioning my reality. The restaurant was closing. There was no one behind me ever to my knowledge. Like, I to this day will say that with like 99 percent certainty. But I started like questioning all of these things. I was like did I imagine this. Did this not happen. Did the waitress lie? Like, why would she lie? And my mom called me, I remember, that night and she said just get off Twitter because she could see what was happening. My Twitter account was public. And I did and I deleted it. And I remember that day, the next day my editor called me and I think I really broke down because I said like this is so messed up when literally people tell you what you experience isn't real. And you literally think like maybe I'm just imagining everything. You know, like, and people can yell at you to get off your porch and I know people would say I was making that up. I was so lucky that I actually had tape of that because I came back, because there are other moments I don't have tape of things and people will say you're just making that up, that never happened.

Q: They said that to you on Twitter?

MS. KHALID: Oh, all the time. You're making that up. You're lying. And, it was the easiest way to convince you that nothing happened. And in hindsight one of my colleagues told me, you should have run your mike more often. Like there were moments when people would say things and I just felt so uncomfortable I'd turn my mike off. And I was like I should have always kept the mike running because then, I mean truthfully, it's a way for people to say that you're not lying. And, it's a way to also when you're like so sleep deprived it would be like, yes, that actually did happen. Because I think when you're so maligned you just start wondering if what you think is what happened genuinely happened. And I know that that sounds really, really weird. Like I say that and you're like, you know, it would be like as if I have this whole talk with you all and then later on somebody is like no, this didn't happen and this didn't happen and then you start wondering like did it not happen. And, I think that that can happen sometimes. So that is apparently gaslighting. I did not know that [indiscernible] -

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DR. HOFFMAN: That is gaslighting.

MS. KHALID: -- this past election.

DR. HOFFMAN: This entire talk has been recorded so we can go back later and, and --

MS. KHALID: [Indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: -- get the evidence for what actually happened.

MS. KHALID: Yeah. I'm sorry; you asked me one other quick question. I don't even remember what it was. I'm sorry, like --

Q: Oh, just what went into the decision to do the piece?

MS. KHALID: Oh, okay. Real quick. Yeah, so to do the piece --

Q: [Indiscernible].

MS. KHALID: Yeah. There was no qualms about doing the piece. I wanted to hold off until the end of the election cycle because I did not want people to say, to dispute the veracity of my reporting.

Q: Sure.

MS. KHALID: And, I honestly wondered after writing it, I thought a lot, I think the only question I had was would people not want to hire me again as a political reporter if I wrote it. Not because I think that anything I said was -- I mean look, some people could say it was biased, right? Like it was subjective so we all have a perspective I think to some degree. Like we all have a perspective, I don't think any journalist. But everything in it are events that happened. All of the editors I think were extraordinarily supportive of writing it. It was my decision to hold it because I didn't think it was of news value and judgment. I do know some other journalists questioned my decision afterwards but ultimately I think I had --

Q: [Indiscernible].

MS. KHALID: -- to live with it. I'm sorry?

DR. HOFFMAN: Well --

Q: [Indiscernible] --

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you, thank you, Dan. I think we actually have to --

MS. KHALID: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- start to wrap up --

Q: [Indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: -- but I appreciate all of your questions. Before we give a great big thank you to Asma for being here, I want to give a couple of

announcements which you should know by now. We're very excited that we're going to be bringing both former Vice President Joe Biden, who is a UD alum, as well as current Governor John Kasich of Ohio who is a Republican governor and has recently written a book about the divides facing America. That's our next talk. That will be at a special time and a special day, Tuesday, October 17th at 1:00 p.m. Doors open at noon. It is a ticketed event. And as I mentioned earlier, as of today most of those tickets have already been retrieved. We will be live streaming the event just like tonight and the, the video will be up afterward. So I hope that you'll stay tuned to that. I think that's a really good example of the kind of dialogue that we have here at National Agenda. I also wanted to remind you about our audio essay contest, Voices of UDEL. And this is for University of Delaware students who are interested in sharing an audio essay about their perspectives kind of in the line of this I believe. You know, what divides have you seen in your life. How have you overcome them? What does it feel like to you? So it's sponsored by a lot of University partners. And just as a reminder, I mentioned this earlier, we do have a, an audio production workshop tomorrow night, October 5th, from 7:00 to 8:30 at the Morris Library. If you would like to learn some audio production skills, if you would like to be the next Asma Khalid --

MS. KHALID: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- you can be at Room B of the Student Multimedia Design Center --

MS. KHALID: But audio is great.

DR. HOFFMAN: Audio is great, I agree. So, let's again say thank you very much to Asma.

AUDIENCE: [Applause].

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you all for being here.