



NATIONAL AGENDA 2019: DIRECTION DEMOCRACY

JAMELLE BOUIE

“Contextualizing Culture”

HOSTED BY

Center for Political Communication,
with support from the Office of the Provost,
Co-sponsored by the Center for Black Culture,
University of Delaware

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Lindsay Hoffman

Director of National Agenda and Associate Director
of the Center for Political Communication,
University of Delaware

Jamelle Bouie

New York Times columnist, *CBS News* political
analyst and former *Slate Magazine* chief political
correspondent, Bouie covers U.S. politics, public
policy, elections and race. He takes audiences to
the front lines of the nation’s most significant news
events, from civil unrest to political partisanship.
He was named to *Forbes*’ “30 Under 30 in Media”
in 2015.

Transcript of Event

Date:

September 25, 2019

Place:

Mitchell Hall, University of Delaware,
Newark, DE



AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Hi, everybody.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: It's great to see you here, ah, for our third event in the Ninth Annual National Agenda Speaker Series, ah, brought to you by the University of Delaware's Center for Political Communication with support from the Office of the Provost. We're also proud to have as a cosponsor tonight the Center for Black Culture. This year's theme, as you saw, is "Direction Democracy." We're looking at where we've been, where we're at, and where we're going in this 240-plus year experiment that is uniquely American democracy. I'd like to remind our audience that civil dialogue is vital to the success of our program. So, let's agree to be candid but also courteous of each other's views. We'll have an audience Q and A at the end of this talk. And you can tweet using hashtag #udelagenda to join the conversation. Tonight, Jamelle Bouie is a columnist for the *New York Times* just starting this past January. He is also a CBS News political analyst and former chief political correspondent for *Slate Magazine*. His columns cover US politics, race, elections, and public policy. So, please join me in giving a big University of Delaware welcome to Jamelle Bouie.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you so much for being here. Well, I know we all know that there's been some big news today, I think.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Tiny, little bit.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] But, I'm actually going to start with a different

topic. Ah, you are also a photographer. If you can see on the screen up here, I have posted a picture of one of your photographs.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: Ah, you are a talented photographer. In fact, you're; one of your recent photos showed this illusive creature. I don't know if you know that our mascot is a blue hen.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Oh.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: What draws you to take photographs? We were talking about photographer earlier. What kinds of scenes inspire you when you're not deluded by the day's news? [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: That's a, a great question. First, thank you, ah, for having me and thank you all for coming out. Um, so, this particular photo, I'll say, this scene, ah, caught my eye because it's just kind of funny. Right? Like, it's a, a giant blue chicken and then a woman completely clad in blue. Um, and I sort of just, she was actually looking – because that's on top of the National Gallery of Art in D.C. – and she was looking out towards the Capitol and kind of like a, a creeper I kind of just like stood there waiting for her to move in just the right place so that there was some symmetry in the frame. Um, and then I took the picture. But, the thing I like about photography is that I, it just uses a different part of my brain. I spend so much time either talking or reading, um, researching that it's nice to deal in a medium that is visual, that is not, like I'm thinking about the frame and I'm thinking about the image but so, so much of it is kind of instinctual. Sort of, you walk past something or you see something and in, in my, in my brain

is, sort of, immediately an image forms and I want to take it. Ah, and it's just like a nice, ah, respite from spending more or less most of my days, ah, on politics.

DR. HOFFMAN: You said you read about a book a week?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, does this help balance out that kind of wonky nerdiness of reading and, ah, having also this creative element to it?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Absolutely. Although, I'll say I read, ah, all the time but I'm not always reading stuff for work. Or if I'm reading something that is history or sociology it may not directly relate to what I'm going to do, um, for the job. But, it is 100 percent of the case that, ah, photography, you know – I have a dog and I walk my dog several times a day and so that's kind of an excuse to leave my house or, you know, leave where I'm working, bring a camera with me and kind of just wander around with the dog and kind of remove myself a little bit from work.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Well, now you're back at work.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Now I'm back at work.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] We're, we're going to move on to the elephant in the room. Ah, you tweeted this earlier today. Um, this is –

JAMELLE BOUIE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – a gif. If I can make sure it animates properly. Whoops. No, it didn't animate properly. Ah –

JAMELLE BOUIE: It's just an old man saying, "Oh, my, God. He admit it!"

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: From, from the, the, that show, um, *I think you should leave*

with Tim Robinson.

DR. HOFFMAN: Right. So, um, you tweeted this GIF this morning when the infamous transcript or memo was released. Um, so, can you tell us little bit about what it's been like to process this news and to report on it over the past 24 hours or so?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right. I mean, it's very striking, right? So, the timeline as we have it is that in the summer, during the summer, ah, Mueller gives his testimony. Um, it kind of falls flat a little bit. The, all the controversy and the maybe will Trump get impeached over the Mueller report fades away. And then, the next day the President has a conversation with the President of, ah, Ukraine, who it should be said is a former sitcom actor who is the star of a sitcom about an ordinary man becoming president.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: And then, he becomes president. When, when I think about that and then I think about our president being the star of "the Apprentice" I wonder if television was a bad idea.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Um –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: But, [chuckle], ah, so the next day after Trump essentially got, got out of the pickle of the Mueller report; he contacts the President of the Ukraine to solicit dirt on his, one of his political opponents, to basically do the thing that he had been accused of doing. Now, I think part of the, part of what's happening in the political world is essentially everyone trying to get over the

shock of that fact. That even people who gave him the benefit of the doubt are reconsidering that. That here is a president who has not learned anything. Who, in fact, may have been emboldened by the fact that he saw no immediate consequences in the wake of the Mueller Report? And so, he's trying again – and, and I made this argument in a column today – to recreate the conditions of 2016: to have a foreign government intervene in the election; to dig up dirt against his likely opponent; to sort of tar his likely opponent with corruption, with malfeasance, with all of these things in an effort to make his opponent as unpopular as he is. And in that race, in, in a race when both candidates were unpopular then the President figures he has a good chance of winning.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, so, what I'm finding really fascinating, and we talked about this in the classroom earlier, is, is this really a different moment, ah, a unique moment in history? And a formal impeachment inquiry for a sitting president is set to begin for just the fourth time in over 240 years –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – of American history. And 400 years since the first slaves arrived here. We'll get to that second part. I want to talk about the 1619 Project the *New York Times* has taken on. But give us some context here. How unusual is this impeachment inquiry? Is it political theater or does it spell real problems for this presidency?

JAMELLE BOUIE: I think it's genuinely unusual. This, this, it's not the case; so, the framers introduced the impeachment measure into the Constitution, and they debated it and their expectation is it would happen pretty often. Not all the time, but their expectation was that, you know, more often than they'd like there would be a judge or a president who was just not up to the duties, who is, who had

committed high crimes or misdemeanors, and the impeachment power would be used with the, not, not all the time but some relative frequency, more common than we see now. Um, but, as, as you say, it's just the reverse. It's extraordinarily rare and I think that's probably a good thing, right? That there ought to be some presumption, um, that you're not going to try to impeach a president you merely disagree with, that you dislike, who you'd rather see do, do different things that you respect the democratic process enough to let, to basically let most defenses fall under that. That for most things if you have a problem you just need to defeat the guy in the next election. Um, but there are times when, right, presidents do things that so violate the norm to run the office, that so violate the expectations of the office that impeachment is a reasonable remedy. And I think the, the immediate – and thinking about the politics of this people jump back to Clinton, when thinking about the precedent people often jump back to Nixon. But, I, I think the relevant precedent for this impeachment is Andrew Johnson. What was Andrew Johnston impeached for? Technically he was impeached for a law, The Tenure of Office Act, which is probably unconstitutional. The law was that the The Tenure of Office Act said that the President could not dismiss a Cabinet official without the Senate's, ah, consent. And the President had to let the Senate know – the Senate didn't necessarily have to vote on it, but they had to be informed. Ah, given, given the President's powers of a, of, of appointing and staffing the Cabinet that kind of seems on its face not, not kosher right? It's not really a law you can, you can pass. But, it existed and when President Johnson dismissed the Secretary of War Stanton, ah, the Senate, or the, the Congress leapt. Like, look, we don't like this guy, he violated this law, he's clearly a tyrant, we're going to impeach him. Ah, and that

was, that was the pretext. But the real reason was that for the past two years, three years Johnson had been a foe of Reconstruction. He had stymied the effort, ah, ah, Republican effort, to reconstruct the south, to extend voting rights to African Americans. He had turned a blind eye to, ah, vigilante violence and racial violence against African Americans. He had essentially become an ally of the former Confederates. And, he, and this is what one, one of the articles of impeachment said, he was using his office to sort of stir up the kind of hatred and violence that was tearing the south apart, tearing the, the post-Civil War South apart. And that to me is a more relevant, ah, example because here, you know, I think if, if it's the case that President Trump has been trying to solicit, ah, foreign intervention that is a genuine offense. Um, if it's the case, as the Mueller Report details, he tried to obstruct justice that is, that is an impeachable offense. But I think the really, the thing that impeachment advocates, and many people in the country are trying to grapple with, is the fact that the President has used his office to incite, right? To incite the worst of our feelings, to incite the worst, um, ah, attitudes, and, ah, ah, threads in like the American, in American public life. And, ah, if he is impeached I think we will have a pretext but the, the real reason he will be impeached is basically for a kind of violating one of the core premises of the modern United States which is that we are a multi-racial democracy. We're not a white man's democracy. We're a democracy where everyone, where everyone has a claim to equality, um, and Trump has vocally, I think, I think, ah, stood against that in the same way or in a similar way as Johnson did.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, lets bring up, ah, what came out today which was this unclassified now document, transcript, memo. Um, how much attention – you know, what's come up in this story is, is Biden, ah, vice, former Vice President



Joe Biden, alum of the University of Delaware and his son and their dealings – how much attention should we be paying to this Biden-Ukraine roots –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – of this story? Is there a story there? How have the media dealt with this kind of one-two punch of Biden/impeachment? Ah, what do citizens need to know about this part of the story?

JAMELLE BOUIE: So, my understanding – there's a couple of things. It's first the case that it's true that Biden had bragged about getting a prosecutor fired. This was in 2016. My understanding is that at the time among Democrats and Republicans this was understood as like a good thing. That this was a prosecutor who wasn't, ah, challenging corruption in the country; that this, that no one – if you go back to the 2016 to when all of this occurred – no one was saying anything about impropriety for Joe Biden. Hunter Biden its clear is engaged in the kind of influence peddling and buckraking and that I think is very unsavory. Right? The trading on your name to pull an easy check is like not great. Um, but is it a scandal? Ah, it's no more a scandal than say the activities of Ivanka Trump and of the Trump children, right? They're kind of doing something similar. I think it's all not great and I wish, ah, they wouldn't do it but the case that the President's making that this is evidence of some, ah, serious corruption, I'm just not sure, I'm just not sure it's true. Um, what is the case, though – and, and sort of evidence for this is that you, if you look at, not evidence but sort of a sign that, that this not as, ah, serious as I think Trump wants it to look – is that even other Republicans – Mitt Romney, Cory Gardner, ah, Ben Sasse of Nebraska – when asked about all of this are far more quick to say, well, let's look at what the President's saying about Ukraine than they are going to Biden.

His [indiscernible] staunchest allies jumped to Biden but other Republicans who aren't so quick to defend the President are a little more circumspect. As for how the press has handled this, I think in the beginning you saw a little bit of this, um, making, you know, making the scandal or making the news event about the potential of Biden impropriety more than the evidence that the President was trying to solicit foreign intervention. I think now with this readout, which is – if you haven't read it, is a very striking; the whole circumstances around it is very striking because Pelosi announced yesterday she was going to pursue impeachment or, or made it very clear that was going to happen, and, and Trump calls her and he's like can we work out a deal, can we figure something out because I don't want that to happen, very obviously. Today they said, "we're going to release the transcript" or this readout and you, you would think if you're going to release this that it can't be that bad, right? [Chuckle.] It can't –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: If they're going to release this to the public then it can't possibly be that bad. There's not going to be a smoking gun. There's not going to; it's going to be hard to parse; we're going to see something that's just going to be a little of a disappointment. They release this readout and I'm reading it, and like the GIF suggests, I'm just sort of like he just said it. He just, you know, you guys want to buy stuff from us, well I need you to, I need you to do us a favor first. And, it's, it, it's so explicit that the only thing that could make it more explicit if, is if Trump, like, turned to the camera and said, like, I want to do some crimes.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Like, that's –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Like a la The Office?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right, right, right. Just sort of directly into the camera, it's crime time, um –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: So, I think that the, the extent to which this readout is kind of a smoking gun, and because it, it's, it's a, it's a redacted document, it's not the entire conversation, suggests even more and given that he, this isn't the only conversation given that the whistleblower complaint is not necessarily about this conversation. Um, it really kind of suggests that there's more out there that's far worse than what we're seeing right now. Ah, and that, you know, that has kind of, that realization has reoriented the coverage back to "Oh, Trump-Ukraine." Um, Biden's sort of receding. And additional reporting on the Biden stuff is sort of undermining the idea that he is necessarily involved in some kind of serious corruption.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, ah, I receive emails from all candidates during presidential elections. My inbox is pretty much always full. Um, but, I'm going to bring up, ah, an email from Trump's campaign last night. It says "Dems launch impeachment effort" and he said, "Nancy Pelosi just formerly called for the first step towards my impeachment." There's lots of capitalization and exclamation points. Um, "this is just another smear job and a pathetic attempt by Democrats to rip the power from the people. I've done nothing wrong. Trust me, you'll see the transcript. Its time to set something straight once and for all. The Democrats constant personal attacks, viscous lies, etcetera, etcetera. Their goal has always been to silence you, Lindsay." Me, among other supporters apparently. "They want to steal your voice and your vote." So what I wanted to ask you, because

you have such a great understanding of political history in the United States, Trump uses this kind of language regularly, suggesting that it's his supporters, it's, it's me or the people he's emailing who are the one's who are threatened. Is this just a simple fear appeal, a simple way to attract people to his message, or is this something more than that? Is this got a, has it, does it have a root in previous campaigns –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – where fear appeals might have been used?

JAMELLE BOUIE: I think it's, it's both bands, right? It, it is just a fear appeal reaching out to supporters and trying to scare, scare them into donating money. Um, I think it also, you can see, in this you can see sort of a Nixonian style of politics, right? This idea, this Nixonian idea of a silent majority of, ah, of the President being both an elite but not of the elites; um, of standing as kind of a representative or avatar of ordinary people who are, ah, put upon, ah, in Spiro Agnew's words, but 'nattering nabobs", um, of the media of, of elite culture. Ah, and its clear to me Trump is not just channeling that here but has been trying to channel during his entire presidency. In his inaugural address he speaks of the forgotten man which is, ah, an, an FDR phrasing but also, like, I think also evocative of the silent majority.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

JAMELLE BOUIE: He constantly says or implies that he won a great majority in the presidential election; that his, his voters kind of represent an authentic America, and I think that too stretches back to this Nixonian idea of dividing the county into this silent majority that doesn't openly speak out in favor of his politics but exists and is for him versus this elite class. Um, the problem for him is just, it

just hasn't been effective, right? Its not like an effective mode of discussion for him precisely because I think most people, and there's polling to this affect, don't like the guy. Even a good, good chunk of people who will vote for him next year don't like the guy. There was, I think, a Quinnipiac survey, um, or maybe an NBC News survey that came out very recently, the past couple of days, where something like 70 percent of surveyed voters said regardless of what they thought of, how they approved of his job performance said, well we just don't like the guy. Um, and, that wasn't the case for Nixon in like '69 or '70, '71 or '72 even. Ah, and, that kind of, that, that basic reality means that this kind of appeal to fear, or this kind of trying to evoke a great majority that actually supports him, it's just not, it's just not going to work.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I was going to bring up, ah, and maybe you have a couple of words to say on this and then I want to move on, but, um, the 1828 John Quincy Adams, um, Andrew Jackson fight was also very riddled with name calling. Um, John Quincy Adams was labeled as a pimp. Andrew Jackson's wife was called – I'm not going to say it – a not so nice name for a woman. Ah, one paper reported, ah, from my hometown of Cincinnati – *The Cincinnati Gazette* – General Jackson's mother was a common prostitute brought to this country with British soldiers. So, I'm curious if this is something that's uniquely American? Is this just like part of who we are? We call –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – each other names at the –

JAMELLE BOUIE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – the national level when we're running, ah, for office? Or is this something that's like every, you know, so often, it kind of –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – resurfaces?

JAMELLE BOUIE: I mean, I don't have a sense of like comparative politics here. Like I'm not sure how, ah, electoral contests have played out in other countries. But it's really the case in the United States, um, name calling, and insults have a long history in our elections. In the election of 1800 John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were vicious towards each other. Um, it's funny to think – its always, for me its always useful to, to try to put yourself into the moment of an historical moment. And so, if you were in 1800 Jefferson and Adams aren't the founding fathers yet. They're kind of just two very prominent politicians who have their supporters and their fierce detractors. And, in that election the detractors on both sides were not, ah, did not hesitate to go after the others. Um, I'm trying to think of another good election for just vicious insults. The 1864 election was, ah, remarkably racist election with, um, the Democratic opponents of Abraham Lincoln. Ah, this is, the, the, the term, um, miscegenation was coined in this election to refer to what Abraham Lincoln was going to do. If he got reelected he would, you know, the blacks would come and take over and marry your daughters and etcetera, etcetera. Um, there is the, is it the 1888 election where the slogan, the anti-Democratic slogan, the Republican slogan is “rum, Romanism, and the rebellion.” That if you elected Democrats they're going to get people drunk, bring in the Catholics, and then maybe rebel against the United States again, who knows. So, this stuff is standard issue and honestly its really the last 50 years of like relatively, up until recently, relatively low-heat elections that are the anomaly. Um, something like 2016 in terms of its, the, the heat of it is probably more in keeping with how elections in this country have been, ah,



than something like, ah, 2000 or, you know, 1996 or 2008.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, let's bring back 2016, right? Um, all right, well, let's go into an alternate universe here which is, ah, I also get emails from the Biden campaign. So, in an alternate universe Biden's team sent this out about the same time as the Trump campaign and he suggested that we've got bad news – "Trump is using the Oval, Oval Office to pressure a foreign power to interfere in the 2020 election. And, it gets even worse. A new poll has us down in Iowa." Are Iowa poll numbers really worse than a president trying to interfere with an election?

JAMELLE BOUIE: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.] [Unidentified comments.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: I think for Biden right now they are [chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle.]

AUDIENCE: [Chuckles.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Um, for Biden that, that's actually the number I'd probably be stressing the most. Ah, I mean they're not worse although I think it's interesting that Biden brings this up because I think it brings up the intervention because I think there's this way in which, you know, over the weekend, right, it was still the case that Speaker Pelosi was hesitant to embrace impeachment and was still kind of an opponent of impeachment. Um, the moderate democratic members of the House were still on the fence or even opposed but the revelation that the President may be trying to, um, ah, cheat, basically in the election a second time I think threatens the interests of those Democrats, of Pelosi, of Biden in a way that the Mueller stuff didn't, right? The Mueller stuff happened in the past. It represents the – obstruction even happened in the past – it

represents the violation of presidential authority, but it didn't have any immediate consequences going forward. But this does. This might mean that, again, ah, whoever's the nominee will, may face the same kind of gauntlet of circumstances that Hillary Clinton did. And that I think was enough to push over a lot of Democrats into saying we at least listen to offer, you know, without removal it's little more than a censure but it's still a censure and it's still something that has an effect on the political landscape.

DR. HOFFMAN: Was there something unique about this Ukraine situation that makes it more, ah, digestible for Americans, that makes it more understandable for them than the previous, ah, sort of, threats for impeachment?

JAMELLE BOUIE: I think the fact that, I mean, this is why the readout is so useful because it is, its very simple, right? Like, you, it, it's the President giving a call to another foreign, a foreign leader saying, and that foreign leader saying we want to do X and the President saying well you need to do Y. It's very simple to explain. Even if some of the underlying issues might be a little complicated, the basic narrative is very easy. Whereas, with Mueller, admittedly, you kind of had to be a little deep in the weeds. It was, sort of, you had to, you had to study up a bit to kind of figure out exactly what Trump had done wrong. But this is, this is, um, far more digestible; it's far easier to understand and I think that's really going to make a difference. Right now, there is some talk that they will limit the impeachment inquiry to just the Ukraine stuff. Um, I think that would be a mistake. I think that this is probably an opportunity to unite a variety of different investigations under this sort of the same roof and draw up an Articles of Impeachment if they're going to do that in a kind of runs the gamut of what they believe the President has done.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, if we all don't mind I'm going to move on from this issue of impeachment. This kind of came up so quickly yesterday. Um, but I'd like to talk more about, um, a project that you're involved in, the 1619 Project, um, from the *New York Times* is about, it's about reframing the country's history around the arrival of enslaved Africans to English North America. And, I wanted to point out in, in a recent column you noted, ah, that you've received considerable pushback particularly from conservatives. You said, "they've made a forceful attack in particular on the idea that the founding was bound up in slavery and white supremacy." You noted that in the *New York Post* Rich Lowery of the *National Review* called this idea odious, an odious and reductive lie. The *Federalist* said it's a sweeping historical revisionism in service of contemporary leftwing politics. I could go on and on. How do you respond to these criticisms, criticisms, and is there anyway a project like this could convince or somehow get through to a white nationalist or someone who has been raised with that sort –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – ideology?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Well, and for those particular responses I, in that column, the, the case I made, um, was that these critics from, tended to read in the best possible faith were relying on an older historiography, and older understanding of the founding but hadn't kept up with what we know, more recent developments in the last 30 years. And what we know about the founding era. And, the two things I cited, two books I cited, one called *The Common Cause*, the others called *Slavery's Constitution*. And, there's a few other books I had cited but those are the two I relied on for making this argument. Ah, both books make the case or deal with the role of race and racism and the formation of both the

revolutionary cause and in the formation of the constitution. So, my response to those critics is not to sort of hand wave away the objection but to say, I get what you're saying, here is my evidence, right? Here is what I think is the history that, um, addresses your critique. And in the case of those particular critiques *The Common Cause* – it's a fascinating book, I highly recommend it – and it, the, ah, it deals with the problem the American Revolutionary space at the outset which is that we always talked about the Americas having been just 13 separate colonies, 13 young countries, that can be a little overstated. But it was the case in some critical ways which is how do you, how do you – imagine yourself as a revolutionary, you're likely a Virginian or you're, you're from Massachusetts. That's kind of the hotbeds of rebellion – how do you convince some large number of your fellow colonists that a) your grievances are the same, b) you should understand yourselves as fighting or existing under a, a common banner, and c) that you're all something called Americans, right? That you all have this common heritage. And the book makes the case that the way the patriots did this was by tying the threat of Britain to the threat of slave rebellions, to the threat of Indian attacks, to kind of a racialized notion of danger in the colonies. And, and to say the British are encouraging these racial others to, ah, attack us and we should be unifying in response to that. And, to make this case, ah, the author, whose name I can't recall at the moment, um, relies on widely circulated newspapers and pamphlets, not so much the front pages but the back pages which held, ah, propaganda and advertisements and all of that kind of thing. And it's a deeply researched, ah, book, um, and I think it makes a good case that when thinking about the formation of American identity we have to consider the extent to which, um, racism and racial othering helped pull it together, helped

give it cohesion. The other book is called *Slavery's Constitution* and it's a much simpler argument and that is just that the constitution did, did two things simultaneously. It established the powerful federal government and then it insulated the institutions of slavery from the power of that government. And so, Congress had, ah, there's a 20-year, um, um moratorium on trying to end the slave trade. Congress couldn't touch it. Ah, Congress couldn't tax slave imports. Congress couldn't levy a tax on the, the enslaved people that, ah, slave owners held. There's all these things Congress could not do which had the effect of keeping slavery untouched by federal power. And if the framers were right, they're, some of them were right and slavery was bound to die off anyway it's not a big problem. But, as we know, that's not what happened. That instead, um, technological advances, um, new territory made slavery far more lucrative and in that environment the Constitution helped facilitate the rapid growth of slavery in the early 19th century, you know, up until just before the Civil War. So that's, that's like my, that's a long explanation [chuckle] –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – but, the main point is that the response to that kind of critique I think has to rely on, ah, ah, showing your work; and showing who you're drawing from; and making a case arguing from, um, good history, primary sources, primary documents, and um, treating it like a journalistic question, right? As for whether this can persuade people who have been brought up with certain attitudes, I think it depends. I think someone who casually holds racist attitudes can totally be persuaded because I don't think they're necessarily intrinsic to that person's like self-definition. But like someone who might call themselves a white nationalist, that's like an ideological statement and I don't think there's anything

they could read that might budge them from that.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I'm going to play devil's advocate for a second because, ah, the students in my National Agenda class, as I was telling you earlier, are reading a book by a moral psychologist, Jonathan Haidt, um, where he argues that all kind of ideological arguments come from a moral perspective, and that conservatives and liberals are simply driven by different moral foundations. And, he argues that you're never going to convince someone from the other side with reason, with argument, that you have to appeal to their emotions. So, how do you approach that in your columns or do –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – do you try to, like, bring people over who, not just with reason, not just with the research, the, the great research that you do for your articles, but somehow try to get them to understand your perspective?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yeah, I'm going to say I don't think that I do. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: I'm just like not, I don't know, by disposition I'm just not the kind of person who necessarily focuses all that much on sort of like how I feel about things on a visceral level. I don't, I don't necessarily think that's valuable. I am really concerned about making arguments. I'm not, I mean, I'm, I'm not convinced that I can persuade someone by saying, you know, here's how I've, here's how I experienced this thing emotionally and let me see if I can get you to understand that.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Um, I, I see my job as, ah, analysis –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

JAMELLE BOUIE: – as, ah, illuminating contemporary events, and that’s how I approach it and I hope, like, my, I, I hope that that persuades people. And I hope that, that, ah, especially on like a circle question that that brings people around to my side. Ah, but, you know, I’m not actually too worried if it doesn’t. And I’m not sure that I’m the kind of person who should be doing the work of that kind –

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

JAMELLE BOUIE: – of persuasion.

DR. HOFFMAN: Right. I just think it’s fascinating because we’re kind of learning different approaches to persuasion and communicating across –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – differences. So, all right, I’m going to jump ahead to, um, you met my students earlier today. Some of them had some great questions I thought I’d throw at you, ah, before we, ah, toss it to the audience – literally toss it to the audience with our Catchbox which is a tossable microphone.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Oh, I know what those are.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yeah, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – it’s fun. Um, so, um, Ta-Nehisi Coates came out, ah, a few years ago in *The Atlantic* for a case for reparations and my student Mandy says, um, kind of picking up on that, do you believe that reparations should be paid to the Americans who have been affected by slavery?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Um, I think, so I think reparation should be paid. I don’t necessarily think that slavery is the way, like the, the base. Like, Coates’ argument actually says nothing about slavery, right? Coates’ argument starts from the premise that after the Second World War black Americans in places like



Chicago and many cities basically had their land taken from them –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Um, through red, through redlining, ah, through financial instruments deliberately designed to defraud them of, of wealth. And I, its one of those things where, ah, I think the legacy of slavery is such that it should inform a public policymaking because there is a direct line between it and present-day conditions. But, in terms of like a reparations program, I think a steadier basis, a stronger basis for it is sort of documented examples of state sponsored theft or state sanctioned theft. So, the federal government, ah, in, ah, ah, Richard Rothstein's book *The Color of Law* deals with this. The federal government facilitates the segregation of urban areas in this country. Um, segregation that basically acts as a wealth-suck for black communities; that they are unable to accumulate wealth because of redlining, because of the, this nexus of the government and lenders and realtors keeping investment away from those areas. Um, we know, you know, there have been commissions that dealt with this that there was forced sterilization of African Americans in Virginia and North Carolina and other southern states. We know that there were the, the best way to describe them are pogroms of violence against black Americans in major cities all throughout the 20th century. Um, this year is actually the centennial of like the biggest wave of them – the Red Summer. You have all of these events of violence and of theft and we have, so, you know, for the older stuff we have children and grandchildren who are still alive; the more recent stuff for, um, redlining in Chicago in the 1960's, ah, for block busting in Detroit in 1970's, those people are still alive. They're still like alive and well.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

JAMELLE BOUIE: And so, that to me, if you're going to, if you're going to devise a program that's like compensating people for wrongdoing, that to me is where you look. Um, that's where you go. As for anything larger than that, thinking in terms of kind of broader racial inequality, ah, I don't necessarily think reparations is like a solution to that. Um, it's useful to think about the last time the United States government paid reparations and that's actually a very, a very critical thing. Reparations are not a claim against white people; it's a claim against the United States federal government which has been continuously existing for over 200 years. Um, but if you think about the last time the federal government paid reparations was to the children and survivors of Japanese internment and there's never any expectation that that would fix anything, right? It's more of a we did incalculable damage to you and so here is some recompense. And I think that's a way to think about it. In terms of fixing racial inequality or these problems you need deeper seeded programs, broader programs that touch every part of the society.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, um, I'll move on to a question from Sun Sreeti [phonetic spelling] who, ah, we talked in Dan Pfeiffer's conversation a few weeks ago, ah, about this survey question that was basically if you could wave a magic wand who would be the, your Democratic Presidential nominee. She says, if you could wave a magic wand, um, this is kind of a, you know, a useful metaphor, um, and fix institutionalized racism in America what would that look like in practice?

JAMELLE BOUIE: What would it look like in practice? Um, well, if I get to wave a magic wand, what that would look like would be a, um, it be a massive program of integration across the entire society. Um, my view of racial inequality – so, I

have two views. The first is that I think the problem of racism isn't necessarily the problem with people with like nasty attitudes. Racist people suck. I've experienced them. It's not great.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: But the problem isn't so much that there are people who hold these views. The problem is that, your race has a direct impact on your life chances. It shapes, ah, your ability to accumulate wealth. It shapes your ability to achieve an education. It shapes the, the environment you live in. It shapes your health outcome. It shapes all of these things, um, that it ought not shape, right? There's no reason why that ought to be the case. Ah, this is coming off. And, ah, one of the, sort of, root causes of all of this is, as I was saying earlier, housing discrimination, ah, it is land discrimination, and you can kind of go back, right, to, I mean, emancipation. It is, ah, it is the fact that the freed slaves did not get any land distributed after the war. It is the fact that, ah, in the years after Reconstruction, um, tens of millions of acres in land were stolen from formerly enslaved people and their descendants. It is the fact that in beginning in the 1910's and 1920's, ah, local, state and eventually the federal government would work to redline, um, and segregate African Americans from jobs and opportunity and that those advantages accumulate over time. Um, there is compound interest, ah, for an investment. There is compound disadvantage as well and looking in the present what we see is compound disadvantage. The, the dividends of those actions taken a long time ago. And, what that looks like spatially in the physical landscape is, is it looks like segregation; it looks like ongoing, ongoing segregated neighborhoods, segregated schools, it looks like all of those things. So, if I could wave a magic wand it would be that what that one

would do is disentangle race from place. It would, um, ah, ah your zip code –

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

JAMELLE BOUIE: – um, would no longer determine your access to the kinds of goods you need to flourish. And in practice, that doesn't mean just radical integration, integration of housing, integration of schools, integration of, ah, every possible facet of American society. And then I think you'd see; you'd see some change.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right, well, ah, thinking about, um, the 2020 election, um, my students are very interested in the candidates running for the Democratic primary. So, Jagger [phonetic spelling] asks, what major issue do you think that Democrats need to focus on that they didn't pay enough attention to last time around if they want to take back the presidency?

JAMELLE BOUIE: If they want to take back the presidency. I was hoping this was going in a different direction because I had an answer for it.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Um, what they didn't focus on last time [pause] –

DR. HOFFMAN: What do Democrats need to encapsulate; what message do they need to send –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – in order to – you, you, your column today was very much about how Trump has a 2016 path; he doesn't really have a different path other –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – than just in, insulting the other person. So, like, what has to happen in 2020 if a Democrat –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – does indeed want to win?

JAMELLE BOUIE: So, I'd say one thing Democrats should focus more on and, and I think they're doing, is drawing a bigger contrast between themselves and the other side on sort of economic policy. An interesting thing about 2016 is the number of voters who perceived Donald Trump as being a moderate Republican. And it's actually not hard to see why. He rejected cuts the social security; he rejected cuts Medicare; at various points he said he was going to repeal the Affordable Care Act with an offer basically healthcare coverage for everyone; he, ah, focused a lot on trade and on jobs; and he kind of sent these signals to voters that he wasn't a typical Republican. And then also he was like viciously anti-immigrant. But there is this cross-section of voters who they are liberal on economic issues, ah, but very, very conservative, even reactionary on the issues of identity, on immigration and race and so on and so forth. In past elections, like 2012 or 2008, those voters voted for Democrats not because – they voted for Obama even – not because they suddenly became racial liberals but because what was salient in those elections was the economic question and the other side didn't add up. But 2016 was unique in that Trump was able to basically muddy the waters on the economics. If you were someone who wanted more infrastructure and thought Medicare was good then, you know, Hillary Clinton said those things too but also Trump did. And in addition, if you're in this cross current –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

JAMELLE BOUIE: – if you're one of these cross current voters, in addition, Trump also doesn't like immigrants. And so, you've just solved your problem.

You know, you know who to vote for. You're going to vote for this guy who hits both your bases. Those voters are still out there and now Trump has been President for four years he has an actual record on the economy and on economic policy and I think there's a possibility that if Democrats sort of really emphasize an economic message and make, make sure it's very distinct from Trump that they might be able to win over some of those voters, not all of them –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

JAMELLE BOUIE: – but some of them – and peel back some of that support from voters who are, voted for Trump who were cross pressured and disappointed in his economic policy making.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right, a couple of more questions since I have you until about 8:30 and we, we'll toss it over to the audience. Ah, two weeks ago on this stage, ah, Rob Rogers who is a political cartoonist – I don't know if all of you guys were here that, for that talk – he was fired from the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* for his anti-Trump cartoons. This is a relatively new phenomenon to basically be called out on the editorial page for your political viewpoints which is often seen as a place where you have freedom to express your political views. Um, I'm curious, do ever worry that your opinions could cost you your job?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Um, I, I, I'm not simply by comparison, a few of my colleagues, ah, sometimes write –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – stories that are about, ah, people being mean to them on the internet –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – um, ah, and if, if they can do that then I think my, ah, well-

researched columns [chuckles] ah –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – stand a chance and won't get me fired. Um, more seriously, the *New York Times* opinion page takes very seriously this idea that it's a place of, sort of, free discourse. Um, and so, unless I were to write something genuinely, ah, ah, transgressive, um, something racist or viciously racist or sexist, um, or, or what have you, ah, I think I'm, I'm in the clear more or less. I think.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Do you think that the public, the general public has a good understanding of the distinction between news pages and editorial pages?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Absolutely not.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Absolutely –

DR. HOFFMAN: Can you help us –

JAMELLE BOUIE: – not.

DR. HOFFMAN: – understand the distinction?

JAMELLE BOUIE: I mean, the distinction is clear to me, right? Sort of the reporters, ah, they, they go out, they collect information, they have their sources, they talk to people, um, they synthesize all of that into a short narrative to explain to you a thing that happened. A happened to B because of C. Um, ah, obviously everyone has a perspective going into this but for them the perspective is not some opinion they're putting out there. It's determined by, you know, it's, the stories they're covering, who they're talking to, kind of the range of, the range of

views and perspectives they're including in the piece. Um, but its all fundamentally on the premise that they're trying to tell you something that happened and make sure you know, um, ah, the like why it's important, why we're writing about this thing and why you should know it. Those of us on the opinion page, on the editorial side, we're just kind of –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – sounding off, right?

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: We're just kind of, we, we also follow the news but instead of telling you this happened and here's why, we're telling you this happened, here's why, and this is what we think about it.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

JAMELLE BOUIE: And this is what we think you should think about it, or this is what we think you should consider. And to me it's a very clear-cut difference, um, but not, it's just not the case for most people. For most people they see a *New York Times* link and they don't make any distinction between if that's a person, if, if, is it from the newsroom, is it a columnist, is it somebody who doesn't even really work for the *New York Times* but is contributing, is it the magazine article, what have you. Ah, and I, I don't know what to do about that. I think that's sort of, that's, that's just a matter of trying to educate people about consuming news and also just to, the only solution other than that is to put out the best possible product so for people who do confuse the two they're not going to think that, you know, we're a rag.

DR. HOFFMAN: I think its partly my job as a professor, I think it's the job of educators largely to, ah, educate children and young people and young adults as

to news literacy – what is news, how is it produced, how do you distinguish among satire versus – we were talking about this earlier – fake news versus real news. So, um, so I'll take responsibility for that.

JAMELLE BOUIE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: I'll, I'll educate the nation. Um, all right, so, you recently tweeted, ah, that, um, whoops, you recently tweeted the following question, um, that one of my students, Jacob, found to be very interesting. He said, what would be the worse outcome for 2020 and the future of American democracy: Trump wins with an outright majority or an even larger electoral college misfire? Jacob says he voted in this poll himself, but he went back and forth thinking about it. Would you be able to discuss which you think would be worse –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Sure.

DR. HOFFMAN: – and why?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yeah. Um, it's a, it's a terrible question and I think it's like poorly crafted because it's a horrible thing to think about. Um –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: I actually, I have the, they came up with this question at a, it says apropos of a conversation that I had last night, I was having dinner with an historian and I had spoken to that evening, ah, a couple of friends, and um, we were just kind of talking about the election and [indiscernible] politics and this kind of occurred to me as a potential scenario. Now, you know, priors here I think that President Trump in office has done a lot of damage to our democracy. I think he's contemptuous of, ah, democratic government; I think he has no real understanding of it; and I think he has done, ah, in his kind of drive to, um, secure advantages for himself, done real damage to our democratic institutions.

And so, granting that, for me at least that's where I'm coming from, um, what would be worse? If he wins next year and he wins because a majority of the public affirm, says we want more of this, we looked at the last four years and we're just sort of like put it in our veins; or, um –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – if –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – if like the last time around most people don't vote for him but he has, his coalition is still electorally efficient and nets him 270 plus votes then he's president. I personally would be able to better deal with a majority of Americans saying yes please more than I would with a misfire because the solution to that first problem is pretty straightforward. Be better at politics [chuckle] right? Just persuade more people, convince more people, mobilize more people, organize better, um, just be better at the game of politics and you can win next time. But that other option, another electoral college misfire, a scenario where – and a larger one, right? – so, a scenario where – and not, not, a very likely one I think, not very likely but a not unlikely one – where the President remains very unpopular; there is super high turnout – these two things will be the case next year – ah, but the way the turnout is distributed you have a ton of people voting in the most populous states, you have a ton of people voting in sort of electorally safe states for Democrats, and Trump gets just the right surge of people in just the right states to win the electoral college victory except instead of a 2.1 million vote deficit like he had last time around he has a 3 or 4 or 5 million vote deficit. I think in that scenario I don't know how one responds to it, right? Like, how do you respond to that politically if you are someone who wants

to sort of change politics, win a victory or whatever because in that, that scenario you have succeeded at persuading your fellow citizens that Trump shouldn't be in office. You, most people in that scenario agree with you if you are anti-Trump; they shouldn't be there. And yet, despite winning 3 or 4 or 5 million more votes, which in any other circumstance would be a resounding victory, because of the distribution of his votes and our state borders, arbitrary things too – one of my favorite little arbitrary facts is that, ah, the Florida, the eastern edge of the Florida panhandle basically if you just lob that off and made it Alabama or the western edge which it is – having family from there it is just Alabama –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – um, then in 2016 Hillary Clinton would be President, right? Just a tiny little – more the border just a little bit eh –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – and you have a different outcome. That to me is insane but that's the system we have. Thank you founding fathers.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Um –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – how do you respond to that? How do you respond to that situation because it's not an, it's no longer an organizing or mobilizing question anymore; it's an institutional question. Our, our, our institutions no longer translate the public will into any kind of like, you know, any, any democratic outcome that people would understand as being fairly democratic and I think it's, it leads to sort of mass demobilization and mass, ah, disillusionment. And rightfully so. Like, if he, if he gets reelected and he loses the national popular

vote by 5 million votes I would be discouraged because I don't know what, I wouldn't know what to do about that. How to respond to that.

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum. All right. Well, I'm going to ask, ah, two of my students, Olivia and Justin – thank you; where's Olivia? – all right, thank you guys. They are going to be responsible for tossing our Catchbox around. But while they're getting set up, most of my students really want to know, you have obviously a, a vast understanding of history and, and culture and politics, what sources do you rely on most for your news?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Ah, for my news, I, I, I feel like I rely on the same stuff as everyone else does. I read the newspaper that employs me, um –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Other than the newspaper that employs you? [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: I, I read, you know, I read a bunch of different political websites like *Politico*, and *The Hill*, and, you know, I read the *Wall Street Journal*. I have a subscription to the *Journal* and to, um, the *Washington Post* and I kind of just read the gamut of mainstream news. I don't really watch cable news at all. I think people shouldn't do that. It's bad, um –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Ah, I, I watched it once, like, I just sat down and watched an hour –

DR. HOFFMAN: Just once? [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – of like *CNN* and it really stressed me out.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: There's like loud flashing lights, loud lights everywhere and

people yelling and I'm just like, I don't, no wonder everyone's so anxious.

They're watching all of this stuff and it –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – makes them feel bad. Um –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – I never really listen to political podcasts; its just like a personal thing. I, I don't want to have politics be in my brain 24/7. Um, Twitter I actually find useful just to see what other journalists are paying attention to and thinking about. Its dangerous to rely too much on that because there's a potential group think. But if you just wake up in the morning and kind of see what you missed, what happened overnight its very helpful. Um, and then I spend a lot of time, less so now these days but I still do spend a lot of time kind of, ah, you know, reading new academic papers that I come across, ah –

DR. HOFFMAN: All right.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – um –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] You're one of the five that –

JAMELLE BOUIE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – read, reads our academic papers. [Chuckle.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Looking for new research. Ah, trying to find other avenues for ideas other than just like the news.

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh, great. Thank you. All right. It's time for audience questions so Justin has the Catchbox. Anyone over here have a question? It looks like there's one right over there, Justin. Don't be afraid to throw.

[Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

Q: Do I speak from here?

JAMELLE BOUIE: You just speak right into it.

Q. Hello, Dr. Bouie. I hope I pronounce your last name right.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yes, although I'm, I'm not, I'm not a Doctor.

Q: Oh.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

Q. [Chuckle.] Well, in your knowledge, yes. However, I have a couple of questions. May I ask the first and second and then you can answer, if it's okay?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Sure.

DR. HOFFMAN: If they're brief yes.

Q: Number one, with this most recent, ah, Ukraine situation, ah, it gave me some suspicion about the whole thing. Ah, do you think Putin is into this picture also? That's my one question.

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay. First question is Putin involved.

Q; So now I can – is Putin into this picture. Is it a triangle of Trump, Putin and Ukraine president who is so young and not that experienced? They're going to control the 2020 election in this country again. That's my number one. Do you think that's could be the picture?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Do, do –

Q: And my number –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Do you want to ask your second question so I can just answer both at once?

Q: The, the second question is, ah, in regard to foreign policy.



What's going on between U.S. and Iran and, ah, Iran, the more U.S. is acting harsh and unreasonable toward Iran, and Iran is going to China and Russia. So, do you think there is going to be a triangle eventually in the future of Iran, Russia and China, the power of the East?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you so much for your questions.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Um, on the Putin question, I, you know, I, I don't know. I'm, I'm not, ah, an expert in, ah, that sort of, those relations. What my, I guess, my educated sort of response would be is that, ah, I don't necessarily think so here. To me, this really seems like an example, and instance of the Ukrainian government recognizing how one might flatter and butter up the President to get something out of him. And the President being, um, sort of like venal and corrupt and using that as an opportunity to kind of advance his personal interest because one thing we know about President Trump is that he doesn't see really any separation between his personal interests and the office of the presidency. It's why he, you know, spends taxpayer dollars at his properties. Its why he sees nothing wrong with doing that because for, it's, its not that he is in the Office of President, its that he literally is, the President is like embodied within him and it's like weird, you know, he doesn't conceive of it, conceive of any separation. On the Iran question, you know, by my lights the most relevant consequence of the United States' hardline towards Iran including tearing up the, um, agreement reached under the Obama Administration is just that really no one believes the U.S. will honor its agreements anymore, that there's no sense of, no one believes, no one wants to take a chance joining a high-stakes agreement with the United States because they believe the next administration or one after that

might just tear it up. And so, that may end up having the effect of driving, um, not just Iran but other countries who may have had tense relations with the United States into the arms of potential partners who they can at least count on some stability. Um, and that wouldn't surprise me at all if that happened.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right, let's take a question over on this side, maybe from a student? That would be great. Oh [chuckle] nice catch.

Q: So, working for the *Times* you also mentioned that you subscribe to the *Post* and sometimes you tweet out their articles too. And I was just kind of curious to see what it's like from the inside, the little bit of a rivalry between the *Post* and the *Times*.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Um, so I, so there's, there's two things here. I don't live in New York and I live in Charlottesville, Virginia and don't necessarily work in the office. I'm only there sometimes. And so, as far as I'm concerned there's no rivalry. Like, I don't, you know, they, they may, they may, I don't know, like, have a copy of the *Post* they throw darts at –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – but I wouldn't know. Um –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: I think, my, my sense of the reporters at the *Times* – because the other thing is that the *New York Times* is a massive organization; there are, you know, over 1,000 reporters and editors. Um, I work for the Opinion Section which is its own kind of thing; we have our own staff, we have our own floor of the building, right? We're kind of just; there's a real separation between us and the newsroom. And so, over in Opinion we don't have any rivalry with any other, with the *Post* or with the *Journal* or with any other, um,

similar kind of place – um, *The Atlantic*; my old employer, *Slate*; what have you. In the newsroom I'm not really sure how their relationship is with the other papers but my, my sense is that it's like a friendly rivalry, right? Like, they're going for the same scoops; they're trying to break the same kind of stories especially in the politics, the politics section, um, the politics team. And so, it's kind of, you know, just the, they, they feed off of each other's energy. Um, and they're both doing good work and so I think, I think it's a reinforcement thing as both sides try to best the other. And it's, it's not hostile I don't think but it's, ah, there might be something there. But again, the key thing here is I work from home, ah, and don't know any of those people.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, just disregard all of that.

JAMELLE BOUIE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Another question? Back in the back, Olivia?

Thank you.

Q: Okay. So, you talked about how, um, with like, in reference to the 1619 Project the U.S. was partly founded through the Revolutionary War on these ideas of like us versus them. And, I was wondering how you think this idea has adapted into American culture over time, and why certain groups in the U.S., like Irish and Italians who were maybe once the them and then folded into the us while other groups have not?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right. Man, that's like a, you know, that's a, that's a class.

Um –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: That's a whole field of study. Ah, the short, [chuckle,] the shortest possible answer I could give is that, ah, the positioning of enslaved people, natives outside of the boundaries of Americanness kind of created a, you could think of it as sort of like three tiers of Americanness going forward, or three kind of segments of Americanness going forward. You had the groups that were still outside of it, right? And so up until, you know, throughout the 19th century, up until the Civil War and the Reconstruction Amendments, African Americans were kind of considered, I mean legally after Dread Scott, incapable of being citizens. They were not citizens, they were, they were like resident aliens basically. But even before that, um, there was a widespread belief that black people just didn't really belong there. Um, the American Colonization Society, ah, was formed in I think the 1810's. It was devoted basically to this idea that will solve slavery problem by abolishing slavery and then shipping them all back to Africa. [Hand slapping.] Problem solved.

AUDIENCE: [Chuckles.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Um, and so that sort of blacks defined outside the polity, natives to a similar extent, um, which is why there's usually very little – I mean there's always, there's always opposition but among the larger public there's never really any serious opposition to the ex-perforation of native land because it was seen as belonging to Americans and not, and in, in belonging to, to white Americans and that natives were kind of just, they were out, they didn't exist from the polity. If they wanted to become part of the polity they had, they had to give up their nativeness. And give up their traditions. And there are ways in which

this is sort of like filtered through in our politics, um, in our political culture, ah, since then. There's this, ah, there's this, ah – I'm trying to think of a , a good example – sorry, this is such a broad topic and I'm, I'm trying to think of like a very succinct thing – a good example is how in the age of Jacksonian democracy the expansion of democracy to propertyless white men came at the same time. Concurrent with that was the disenfranchise of, disenfranchisement of free blacks in the north. And these two things were actually seen in the moment as two sides of the same coin; that if we're going to let propertyless white men vote then it does not make sense to let black men vote because propertyless white men, they're still white men, they still have some entitlement to Americanness and American citizenship and blacks don't really. Ah, and it takes the Civil War basically to like shatter that and, um, expand the polity at least temporarily to include blacks. Ah, and even then they're still outside. Lincoln, you know, ah, the Lincoln government did fight wars in the west against native Americans. So, that's kind of, there's, that's kind of the black-white segmentation. But then you have like the foreign segmentation. And, that's a little complicated because, you know, in 1840's a, a large wave of German immigration and Irish immigration, you have even larger wave of European immigration in the late 19th century and in the moment those immigrants were understood as being, like, not, not quite like us. Um, one of, I'm not going to call this, it's, it's funny in this kind of ironic sense but the, kind of demographic panic you sometimes see now about Hispanic immigration, about the crisis at the border was almost word for word happening in the early 20th century except it was about Italians and Russians, right? They were sort of like these swarthy papists are coming across the ocean and they're ruining our society and we've

got to do something about it. They're bringing disease, they're bringing the, the rough equivalent of Islam then, of Islam now it was Catholicism, the rough equivalent of like radical Islam was like anarchism. These anarchist Italians are coming over and they're ruining everything. And this was like a, this inspired, you know, harsh immigration restrictions in the 1920's. The Johnson-Reed bill of 1924 basically put a strict limit on immigration from Italy, from, ah, Eastern Europe, from Russia, from the Balkans, and kind of had, ah, high limits, or, or allowed a lot more immigrants from Northern Europe, from the UK and, and everything. Um, but, it was also the case that these immigrants were of European descent like many Americans, and it was the case that they weren't at the bottom of the totem pole; at the bottom of the totem pole remained, especially in the eastern part of the United States and the south, black Americans who were still kind of a pariah class. And so, sandwiched between this pariah class and then kind of like Anglo-Saxon, you know, white Americans, people of English stock and of German stock, um, are these people who it was possible for them to assimilate just enough to escape the stigma of their foreignness. And so, I mean really, at this point you're, you're in 1930's and 1940's and the Second World War, the depression and the Second World War are these massive events that end up shared experiences that end up, ah, collapsing some of these distinctions and some of these, ah, categories and allowing some number of Italians and Eastern Europeans, so on and so forth, to kind of claim whiteness as an entitlement that brought sort of full citizenship. That is a very short summary.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, you've –

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] Thank you so much. You've recommended so

many books along the way today. Is there a book or an article or a series of writings that you might recommend around this topic since you said this could be a course in and of itself?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yeah. Wow. Hum. Ah, [chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: You can send it –

JAMELLE BOUIE: There's –

DR. HOFFMAN: – to me later if you want and I can share it.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yeah. The, the one, one book that I found very, um, ah, very influential is a book by a, a scholar, David Roediger, called, ah, *The Wages of Whiteness* which kind of deals with working class, white working class formation in the 1840" and the 1850's. There's another book called *Love and Envy, Love and something (Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class)* that is about minstrelsy as one of, as a cultural product that helped develop kind of white working class identity that, you know, by having this form of art that involved white men taking on black face it both allowed, it both allowed audiences to sort of define themselves against something they were not. It's very interesting, um –

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I know you don't listen to podcasts but the 1619 podcast deals with exactly that.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: I think it's the third episode about the history of minstrel shows in this country and how they sort of were the first real roots of American music.

JAMELLE BOUIE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, so I highly recommend the 1619 podcast to expand on

some of this. So, let's find; let's get a question from the middle here. Who has the cube or the Catchbox? Let's do the young man in the peach tee-shirt [chuckle.]

Q: Ah, I just wanted to know how you got started in your career in journalism?

JAMELLE BOUIE: Sure. Um, it's not a very exciting story. Ah, I graduated from UVA in 2009. I, ah, basically majored in sort of like political theory and political philosophy, um, and I didn't want to law school. So, I needed a job and I stayed in Charlottesville for a year kind of doing odd jobs for the university not really doing anything systematically. But during this time, I was writing a blog about politics because it was, all of this was concurrent with the 2008 election, and sort of the first year of the Obama Administration. I was always very interested in that stuff. So, I wrote, I was writing this blog and with this blog I met other [chuckle], young, ah, 22- 23-year old's who didn't have jobs and were also writing, um, and we were trying to get jobs.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: And, ah, all of us ended up, um, recommending to each other jobs that opened up, freelance opportunities, that kind of thing. Kind of a little mutual aid network of, of broke 20-something's. And, ah, a fellowship at a magazine called *The American Prospect* was up. The person who had it before had moved on, And so, I applied for it, um, just like two months before I was going to lose my job and, ah, like two weeks before I lost my job they were like, hey, you're hired. And I was like, thank you. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: This is a godsend. Um, and that's how I got into journalism, more or less. Ah, for reasons I still do not understand the *Prospect* hired me and, ah, kind of, got a, I got a crash course in journalism and it turned out, you know, I was, the fellowship lasted a year. It turned out I was not, ah, terrible at this and they renewed it for another year and then I kind of have stuck with it. I have no other skills so –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – um, this is, this is what I do now.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: All right, I think we have time for one more question. Let's take it, ah, all the way in the back on the – thank you, Justin.

Q: Ah, thank you. I'd like to thank you, Mr. Bouie. I'm sorry if I'm butchering your last name.

JAMELLE BOUIE: No.

Q: – and for you coming today.

JAMELLE BOUIE: You just got to remember there is no accent on it. Yeah –

Q: Oh.

JAMELLE BOUIE: – it's like it's very American. So just like Bouie.

DR. HOFFMAN: It's like what rests in the water. It's –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yes.

Q: Mr. Bouie. All right. Well, thank you. Um, my question draws back to the earlier conversation we were having about impeachment and the whole proceedings of it. Ah, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was so reticent in pursuing impeachment inquiries because of the ability it would have to divide

and, ah, kind of rile up the country over this very divisive issue. So, my question to you is as a political analyst, do you see this impeachment inquiry as being a detriment to Trump's 2020 campaign or more of as a tool he will use to rile up his base and, ah, kind of take us into the same 2016 –

JAMELLE BOUIE: Yeah.

Q: – situation? Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

JAMELLE BOUIE: I guess my, my kind of priors here, right, is that Trump is unpopular. This is a thing that I think sometimes that's lost because his base seems so intractable and is so committed to him but right now the economy is growing at a pretty decent clip, there's wage growth, unemployment is low. Under these conditions a normal president, and when I say a normal president I mean just like a body that hung out in the office and said or did nothing, right ?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: That, that sort of – have you ever watched Community, the mascot of, of the school? That human that like –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – that human being that, you know, flesh colored human being with no facial, facial features would have like a 55 percent approval rating, right? Sort of like, would be genuinely popular because in the absence of a war that is, ah, ah, capturing the public's attention, right – we are fighting wars but they're not really in the public eye – in the absence of not economic, like serious economic depravation in the presence of growth, in the presence of, um, general domestic tranquility that's, that's reelection, baby. That's, that's how you win. But the fact that Trump has those conditions and his approval rating at its best,

best possible circumstances, best possible scenario thus far over the course of the last three years is 44 percent. That's how high he gets. Um, the fact that right now I think he's at around like 43 percent, that's the average, ah, the fact that disapproval numbers have consistently been basically not just 55, 56, 57 but the majority of the disapprovers are strong disapprovers. This isn't people who would be persuaded otherwise; they just like hate the guy. Um –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: – that, that's a sign of unpopularity. What that tells me as an analyst is that if next year we have a mild recession his approval rating just tanks. Right? Like, there is no; he has kept afloat basically by the fact that things are going pretty well right now. And so, with that as my premise, I just, I do not see the world in which an impeachment trial of any kind helps him. Maybe it's a wash. Maybe it doesn't ultimately have no effect on the outcome of next year, but it doesn't help him because what is an impeachment trial, what are, what is an impeachment inquiry? It's a, it's, it's a unique event in the nation's history that involves the House of Representatives going through every possible bit of evidence of crimes, um, that the President has committed. And we also know from public opinion over the past three years that whenever these kinds of things are in public view, whether they are the Mueller Report, or whether they are, ah, something like what happened after Charlottesville, his approval rating takes a definitive dip. It always dips during these points. And so, for me an impeachment trial for an unpopular president if nothing else means his popularity is going to take a notch down and may not be able to even get back to that high-water mark, um, of 44 percent. So, I don't, I don't think there's anything to worry about in terms of it making him popular because the counter example, Bill Clinton

– Bill Clinton, ah, ahead of impeachment was like doing 50, 59, and 60 percent. You know? Like, the public was in on Bill Clinton and so when you had ,ah, the impeachment trial, regardless of what you think about it, it was going against the current of public opinion. Most Americans didn't want to see him impeached. Right now, you know, impeachment, I think, 40 percent of Americans want to see him impeached. But if you dig into the numbers it's something like 95 percent of Republicans oppose, oppose impeachment and 70 percent of Democrats support it with 30 percent who don't support it, and independents roughly evenly split. And so, if because of, if, if now the Democrats rally behind it, if that Democratic number goes up, 80, 90 percent of Democrats support impeachment then that's all of a sudden a majority of Americans support impeachment. Like, that's, that's the difference. That's it. Um, so yeah, that's the long way of saying, ah, I think it's, its, I think it's not going to help him. Yeah, I, I can't imagine it helping him. It just seems, it seems crazy to think that there's a voter out there who's like I disapprove Donald Trump, I don't like the guy, I was going to vote for his opponent and then he got impeached and now I support him.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] All right. Very good point. I'm so excited that our next two speakers are coming from a very different perspective, from a more conservative perspective. We have Tara Setmayer who is a GOP, ah, commentator, and Chris Christy who will be here on, ah, November 6th. I hope you will join us for that. I'm going to wrap up, ah, before we say thank you so much to Jamelle for being here, I wanted to point out that, ah, yesterday was National Voter Registration Day and we were on the Green and it was very exciting and – oh, I didn't mean for both, both those images to come up – but, ah,



I, last I heard, ah, nearly 400 students signed up yesterday to vote on the Green in a non-election year. So that's pretty exciting.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. But I wanted to point out, I am like a, a graph nerd. You're a history nerd, I'm like statistics and graph nerd. This particular graph comes from the, um, National Student – ah, I'm going to get, mess it up – we call it NSOLV (phonetic spelling). NSOLV data that comes out every two years about, ah, universities and campuses who are, about their registration to vote. And so, of about 1,000 universities, the University of Delaware was measured in their registration rates, which you can see in the far-left column, ah, we increased our voter registration rates by quite a bit. I'd like to point to the far-right column where you can see that, ah, from 2014 with a voting rate of – and I can't read that from here. 19 point –

AUDIENCE: 14.8

DR. HOFFMAN: 14 point?

AUDIENCE: 8.

DR. HOFFMAN: 8 – thank you. All right, so this is a lesson in chart literacy. 14.8 percent to –

AUDIENCE: 41.6 percent.

DR. HOFFMAN: 41.6 percent of the University of Delaware student body voted in the 2018 midterm. That's more than double and if you look right above that right chart, 39.1 percent, higher than the national average. So, University of Delaware, go vote.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Go, guys!



AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Go Blue Hens! All right. So, the last thing we like to do this year is I do a what's, I'm calling my Doc Hoff's QuickTake and I'm sorry my students are embarrassed that their picture is up here. Um, one of the things we did yesterday as part of National Voter Registration Day is we debuted our campaign this semester to engage in, ah, a nonprofit program called Free Intelligent Conversations. And did anyone see us yesterday on the Green? Thank you. So, we literally held up signs that said called Free Intelligent Conversations and you might notice a couple of famous UD, ah, ah, famous people there – the President and the First Lady. Um, they loved the idea. What is it? It's talking to strangers about intelligent things. That's it. [Chuckle.] It's just about engaging in conversation with people that you don't know. And, I was really worried that my students would not be into this, that they'd be embarrassed, that they'd be, like, I don't want to talk strangers or that the people who would be walking by would say why are you talking, what are you selling me; why are you talking to me I want to look at my phone. And I can't tell you guys how excited I was to see yesterday the students engaging in conversation, smiling at each other, laughing with each other, and really enjoying just engaging in conversation across differences. It wasn't about politics, it wasn't about religion, it wasn't about all of this stuff that we have to kind of wrestle with every day. It was just questions like, you know, what's the most inspiring thing someone has ever said to you? Um, what would you do if you only had 24 hours left to live? Okay, a little dark. But –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – still –



AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – it brings up some interesting conversations with strangers. So, on this campus for the rest of the semester I want you guys to keep an eye out for my students who will be holding these signs. Um, we’re going to be doing another event on Friday, this Friday on the Green from 2 – 4 pm. There’s also, ah, an RSO, Registered Student Organization called Let’s Talk that is engaging in this same activity and they’re next meeting is on Monday at –

UNIDENTIFIED: 5:30 –

DR. HOFFMAN: – 5:30 –

UNIDENTIFIED: – to 6:30 in Memorial 124.

DR. HOFFMAN: – in Memorial 124. So, if you’re a student interested in joining an RSO that, ah, is about just talking with others it’s, it’s a novel concept, I know. Just talking. [Laughter.] Um, but as a communication professor it excites me greatly to see students just really wanting to engage with each other. So, before I wrap up, I want to remind everyone about, ah, our audio essay contest called “Speak Up”. Ah, we want you to tell your story. This is a two to four minute, ah, audio essay that all students are encouraged to submit entries to. There are cash prizes so there’s that, um, to keep in mind. You can also check out cpc.udel.edu for all of our other initiatives and events. Um, sometimes I feel like we’re doing so many things I forget to report on all of the things that we’re doing. Um, finally, our next speaker is, as I mentioned, Tara Setmayer, one week from today right here in this room. Um, she’s a CNN political contributor, media commentator, podcast host, and former GOP communications director. What’s interesting about her, she’s a Republican commentator who’s also not so fond of Trump. So, kind of interested to see her perspective from a GOP



perspective on, ah, on what's happening in current government. So, with that, I thank you all for being here and let's give a big round of applause to Jamelle.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Thank you.

AUDIENCE: [Cheering.]

JAMELLE BOUIE: Thank you.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

#