



NATIONAL AGENDA 2019: DIRECTION DEMOCRACY

ROB ROGERS

“Drawing Democracy”

HOSTED BY

Center for Political Communication,
Co-sponsored by the Department of
Art and Design,
University of Delaware

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Lindsay Hoffman

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

Rob Rogers

Award winning, nationally syndicated editorial
cartoonist formerly with the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Rogers' work has appeared in the
New York Times, the *Washington Post, USA Today, Time, Newsweek*, and *The Week*. Rogers
talks about the importance of satire in today's
political climate in his most recent book, *Enemy of
the People: A Cartoonist's Journey*.

Transcript of Event

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Place:

Mitchell Hall, University of Delaware
Newark, DE



ANNOUNCER: Your host for this evening, Dr. Lindsay Hoffman.

DR. HOFFMAN: [No audio] – National Agenda Speaker Series. I'm so delighted to bring our second cartoonist under my wing of doing this. I think political cartooning is such an important part of the history of our democracy, ah, whether it's from the right or the left. Um, I'm from the Center for Political Communication; the Associate Director there. And, this year's theme, as you know, is “Direction Democracy”. We're looking at where we've been, where we're going and where we're at in this historic, ah, 240-plus years of democracy in this country. So, I'd like to remind our audience, I know it's annoying, that civil dialogue is vital to the success of our program. So, let's agree to be candid but also courteous of others' views. We'll have an audience Q and A at the end of the event tonight. So, you can tweet us using #udelagenda if you'd like your question asked. Or, you can just show up your question in, in the Q and A. So, tonight without further ado, Rob Rogers is an award winning nationally syndicated editorial cartoonist formerly with the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*; formerly being kind of the most important part of his story. His cartoons have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *USA Today*. Of his many awards, most recently Rogers was awarded the Berryman Award from the National Press Foundation. He's also been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. So please give a big University of Delaware big Blue Hen welcome to Rob Rogers.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

ROB ROGERS: Thank you very much, Lindsay. Appreciate it.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, thank you, Rob, for being here.

ROB ROGERS: Sure.

DR. HOFFMAN: I'm going to sit, ah, you –

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ROB ROGERS: Okay.

DR. HOFFMAN: – have a presentation you've already prepared. So –

ROB ROGERS: I do.

DR. HOFFMAN: – let's –

ROB ROGERS: – I do.

DR. HOFFMAN: – get into it.

ROB ROGERS: Ah, can everybody see that? Is that big enough? Ah [chuckle.] Am I blocking you if I stand here? Good. Ok. All right. Ah, because sometimes I like to look up at my own work and admire it. Ah –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Ah, as Lindsay mentioned, first of all, thank you for having me. Ah, it's exciting to be here. And, and, what's a Blue Hen? I mean what is that?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: I mean – [chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: It's a Fightin' Blue Hen.

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: It's ferocious.

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Okay. I just need, I need to see what that looks like. I want to draw one, but I don't know quite what it looks like.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – I know, I, I, I'm getting that its blue, ah, and it's probably a hen. But, okay.

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AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Anyway, I; as she mentioned, I'm from Pittsburgh where it pretty much rains everyday so I'm happy to be here in, in Delaware, ah, where it only rains on Tuesday, um.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: I was told that would be funny, yeah. [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Um, okay, so, editorial cartooning has a long history in this country starting with them damn pictures today because them damn pictures is a phrase used by Boss Tweed to talk about the work of Thomas Nast. And, Thomas Nast was a political cartoonist in New York City around the turn of the last century, two centuries ago. And ah; oh, there it is. Oh, sorry, it's going too fast. Hold on. Um, and this cartoon is one of them that he did – that's Boss Tweed as the vulture over New York, ah, state, or New York City and, ah, the bones of the Treasury and, and the rent payer and all of that. He was very corrupt. And, um, and the caricature that Thomas Nast did of Boss Tweed became very famous and was distributed around the world. That'll be important in the story later. Um, this is what Boss Tweed said, he said "I don't care so much what the papers write; my constituents can't read. It's them damn pictures."

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Ah, so, this is just to illustrate the importance of editorial cartooning over, over the years, ah, in this country. Um, here's another, another cartoon by Thomas Nast. This is "Who stole the people's money, do tell." And,

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ah, "it 'twas him" and everybody's pointing at each other. This is sort of the circling firing, ah, ah circling firing squad there; circular firing squad. But, more importantly, even before Thomas Nast we had people like Ben Franklin and Paul Revere, founding fathers who you know their history of this country, but, you may not know that they were also editorial cartoonists. This is, ah, Ben Franklin's famous "Join or Die" cartoon where he has the snake split up into all of the different colonies trying to get people to join together to oppose the crown. And, um, this cartoon became very famous and was used even, ah, years later, ah, after the revolution again. Um, this was Paul Revere's print of the Boston Massacre which also rallied people to get behind the revolution. So, even the founding fathers were into political cartooning in a way that, you know, many people don't know about. So, so it's very important to our history. Now, moving forward, ah, here we have a Herb Locke cartoon from 1950 where he coined the phrase "McCarthyism" and there's all these buckets of tar and, and the, the Republican elephant of the 1950, ah, convention is saying "you mean I'm supposed to stand on that?" And then, later of course Herb Locke became famous for all of his cartoons about Nixon. Ah, "I am not a crook." Ah, here's a Paul Conrad cartoon. Conrad was the one cartoonist that did end up on Nixon's enemies list, so, his name. Ah, he says, "I'm sorry I don't recognize any of them." And of course, it's Nixon looking at, ah, his own mugshot. I mean, yeah, Nixon looking at his own mugshot. So, um, those are just a few of my heroes, Conrad and Herb Locke, but there, there are many more. Um, I've been drawing for, political cartoons for over 30 years. And so, I've drawn a lot of presidents. So, one of the things I wanted to illustrate here is how it's sort of unusual that a political cartoonist who is drawing cartoons about a president would be fired for

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doing his job. [Chuckle.] But that's what happened. So, um, I started out with the , ah, well, where am I pointing this?

DR. HOFFMAN: Back towards the back [indiscernible.]

ROB ROGERS: [Chuckle.] Hey!

AUDIENCE: Hey.

ROB ROGERS: It's the –

DR. HOFFMAN: There you go.

ROB ROGERS: Oh, okay. So, so I started, ah, drawing Reagan, Reagan cartoons during, during the middle of Reagan's presidency. This was his reelection campaign in '84 but he, he was meeting with the Russians and, ah, and Gorbachev, ah, was going to meet with him but he says, um, "he's agreed to meet with you, but he won't wear the costume."

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: A little Star Wars reference there. Um, okay, next came George H. W. Bush, ah, who was the, the following president and he of course was famous for, ah, his flip flopping on taxes. So, there he is. You might remember his famous, ah, his famous line about, um, you know, "read my lips, no new taxes." Um, okay, so this one is Bill Clinton, obviously he's, um, he's the next president. And this was a famous, ah, cartoon. He's saying, "did I mention the economy is doing great?" And, of course, we see the next –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – "Did I mention the economy is doing great?" So, so yeah, so Clinton, even the Democrats, you know, you could make fun of the Democrats, that was, that was fine. Um, and I think that it, you know, people, people used to call up to the newspaper when I was drawing cartoons about

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George W. Bush and say well why don't you ever make fun of Clinton? So, I'd go back, and I'd pull out all of the cartoons I did on Clinton and say, well, there was this one and this one and this one and then they'd go, oh, okay. You know? Here's another one about Clinton and the guy is saying "is it possible to just impeach him from the waist down?"

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: [Chuckle.] So this, this was a, a compilation that I did basically showing, um, George W. Bush's caricature and how the caricature sort of evolved over time and, and one of the things that happened was, ah, you know, his, his face changed because I, I, you know, when I start to draw somebody I, I have to look at pictures of them and figure out how I'm going to draw them. And when I first started drawing George W. Bush he looked a little bit like that, and that was not that much of an exaggeration. But then, the next one was – oops. Ah, next one. Ah, so then we have, ah, November '99 and there, you know, his eyes are a little closer together; his, his ears are getting slightly bigger. And then, um, there he is in May of 2000 and, ah, his ears are bigger. Next one, we have January of 2001, his, his eyes are now these little, just little dots. And then, next we have September of 2004 and there he is. So, that, that was how I drew him for the rest of his term, ah, the rest of, the, the next four years. So –

DR. HOFFMAN: So, in case anyone's unclear, definitely cartooning from the left.

ROB ROGERS: Yes, exactly.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.] Yeah, I mean, I, cartoonists are paid to have

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their own opinions most of the time and, and I think, I think 99 percent of my colleagues have the same arrangement I had which was, you know, we want you to draw your opinions and your cartoons. So, I was a progressive, a liberal cartoonist. I was working for a liberal progressive paper. So, it all worked out fine until later. And I'll tell you about that, um. Okay. Maybe I'm – oh, I see what's happening here. I'm hitting the wrong button. Okay.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: So, it's all my fault. I thought it was, ah, yeah. Okay. I was hitting the –

DR. HOFFMAN: Blame, blame the technology.

ROB ROGERS: – I was hitting the power button. [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: My fault, my apologies to the guys in the back. Okay.

Here's one of the W cartoons I did, "You no longer live under the ironfisted regime of the evil Saddam. We're here to liberate you."

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.] [Groans.]

ROB ROGERS: "Mistakes were made. Mistakes were made." "Mission accomplished."

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: I was just telling somebody at dinner that, um, I often like to, ah, try to fit Nixon in wherever I could. So, this was one of those times. Because I, I came along right after, you know, after Watergate, too late to draw, to draw Nixon. But, look at me now. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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ROB ROGERS: Ah, this was, this was Obama – midterm shellacking. This was when the, the Tea Party sort of got ushered in during middle of his term. And here he is saying, “I had a hard time communicating my message.” “What did he say?”

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: “He said he’s a hardline communist messiah.”

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: So, you know, the, the, the funny thing is, you know, I, I did draw cartoons about, you know, both, you know, conservatives and liberal presidents but certainly my politics and Obama’s politics were more aligned so it was, you know, it wasn’t; they, they weren’t the vicious cartoons. I would make fun of him in times like this. But so, yeah, so, it really was different but, but I did try to address as many of the issues as I could with all, you know, no matter whether it was Democrats or Republicans. Here’s – this was right after Obama, you know, they found and captured and killed, ah, Osama Bin Laden. And so, here he is, I figured, you know, he’s like the Wicked Witch that they could never get so I, I figured a scene from the Wizard of Oz would be appropriate. Here he is saying, “He’s not only merely dead, he’s really most sincerely dead.”

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.] [Applause.]

ROB ROGERS: Thank you.

AUDIENCE: [Cheering.]

ROB ROGERS: [Chuckle.] And of course, down in the corner you have a birther who’s saying, ah, “I’m going to need to see a death certificate.”

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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ROB ROGERS: Because they never believed anything Obama said or did, um. And then of course, finally, the last president, passing of the torch and here we go.

AUDIENCE: [Groans.]

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.] Get ready. So, you know, one of the questions I get asked the most is where do you get your ideas, as if I go down to the local idea store and, you know, pick up a couple of ideas for the morning, ah, with my coffee. But, um, but it is, it is kind of a process that's hard to explain. But I'll do my best to explain it a little bit here. Um, so one thing that happens is sometimes ideas come to me visually. Like I see something on the news and it, and it immediately sparks an image and I think, oh my God, I've got to draw that. So, this was a, a case in point. This was Benjamin Netanyahu at the United Nations giving a talk about Iran's nuclear capabilities and how, oh, they're going to, you know, they have this big threat. So, he shows up and there he is and what did he do? He brought a cartoon with him. So, he brought this bomb. And I, I immediately looked at the bomb and I said that looks just like a cartoon from the Warner Brothers, you know, bomb. So, I drew this. And there's Ahmadinejad saying, "Okay, who leaked our nuclear bomb design to Netanyahu?"

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: And of course, there's Wile E. Coyote –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – looking very, very guilty.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: [Chuckle.] That was a fun one. Here's; so, here's another story that sort of sparked that same image in my head. This was Dick Cheney

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trying to defend interrogation techniques and, and saying that is was okay, you know, to torture people. And, um, the CIA had just come out with a torture report. And so, I imagined, well, what about our civil liberties, you know, and that immediately made me think of the Statue of Liberty. So, I thought, okay, I'll draw Cheney as the Statue of Liberty. So, here he is –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – and there he has the torture handbook and he's saying, "Bring us your huddled masses yearning to be waterboarded." [Chuckle.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Now, every day I start out with my sketchbook and this is an old, this is an old page out of my sketchbook, so forgive me, but this is from 2004 and it was groundhog's day so, so, or it was about to be Groundhog's Day (sic). So, I have Groundhog's Day WMD intelligence, Janet Jackson's wardrobe malfunction – remember that – and, gay marriage in Massachusetts. So those are the topics that I'm working with, you know, and I'm thinking about and I, I sort of mulled them over in my head. And then, on this particular day I decided to combine two of those topics and, ah, ended up with the finished cartoon here. I mean that's the, that's the sketch and then here's the finished cartoon. So, the first two topics: Groundhog's Day and WMD intelligence. There's Punxsutawney Phil and Bush is saying, "I was wrong about him having weapons of mass destruction, but he was still a threat."

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: And of course, no one wants six more weeks of winter, so, you know, of course he was a threat.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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ROB ROGERS: Ah, but that's, that's sometimes how my mind works. I, I, I look at two topics that are very different and very disparate and I think, oh, well what if I combine those, that would be a surprise. And yet, it still gets the point across that I need to get across, while also getting Punxsutawney Phil into a cartoon. So, ah, there you go. Um, this is a, a, an illustration I did for an editor's magazine where I compared the cartoonist's brain to the editor's brain just to show you how different they are. First we have the cartoonist's brain. The largest thing on his or her mind is, of course, toilet humor.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Then, then you have things like winning a Pulitzer, keeping his or her job, and that tiny, tiny little part of the cartoonist's brain, that is taste.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: All right. Then you have the editor's brain. Now, there are many women editors, but I had a man so that's why I drew a man. But, editor's brain, he's thinking about things like not offending readers, keeping the publisher happy, winning a Pulitzer, kissing up to advertisers, the bottom line, and that tiny part of the editor's brain that is sense of humor.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: So, as you can see they don't really match up and so oftentimes we were like this [visual gesture]. Ah, but now the good news is I had some great editors at the *Post-Gazette*. The last one, um, before, I mean, before the last one [chuckle], um, Tom Wozaleski. He was, he was fantastic and he would actually call me and we would talk about the ideas – because I was

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working at home at that point, and ah, out of my home studio – and we had a good relationship and he would always make the cartoons better if they needed to be made better. Ah, he would tell me if they, if I was, if I was going in a wrong direction. Um, so, it's very rare to get a good editor like that. And so, I was, I was very happy to have him. Um, and that's why it was such a shock when everything sort of went upside down. Um, here's, here's a little bit about the process of cartooning. You know, it doesn't just automatically happen. We have to sit down with a piece of paper and, and pen and, um. So, let me draw you a picture. Ah, step one, find a topic that begs for satire. Now, I drew this during the campaign, so this is why –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – “GOP candidates compare penis size.”

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Hello. Ah, step two, choose the perfect metaphor. I can't draw genitals in a family newspaper, but hands are okay. “Things with small hands, baby, watch T-Rex.” And then, step three, create a rough sketch using your favorite sketching tool. I don't recommend the fork, but.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Ah, this is a, this is my actual sketch from my sketchbook and so some people prefer using a pen, ah, some sketch with a pencil, and then some use a tablet.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: [Chuckle.] Ah, step four, transfer the sketch using a light table or some other black magic. Um, I use a light table for mine. I, I draw it right onto the Bristol. And then, step five, ink the cartoon using an inking tool of

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choice.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Step 6 add color either by hand – some people do everything on one piece of paper and, and they have a color original when they're done, and then others like me, I use, ah, the computer and I use Photoshop. So, or do it digitally. Why isn't this working? And then finally, step seven, stand back and watch as readers react to your brilliance. "I don't get it. Give it a sec. I still don't get it. Give it another sec. I don't have all day."

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: And here you can see the, the rough sketch in this, out of my sketchbook and then the ink, ah, version where I flipped it because I felt like it made more sense if he was walking left to right. And then, then the color added on the computer there. And there is the finished cartoon. So – uh, "My small hands don't seem to be slowing me down at all."

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: So, that was a pretty tasteful way to, to tell a penis joke, right? I mean, ah –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – but I got it in the paper. And, the –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – now, the reason I, I want to show you this is, is, you know, people ask well, you know, are cartoon's important; do they have an effect? All you have to do is look at an editorial page with the cartoon on it and your eye is immediately drawn to it. Even before they started running these in color, you

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know, the, the cartoon made the most impact. So, its really kind of hard to ignore that image. So that also gives the cartoon an extra oomph that you can't get from these sort (sic) of graying editorials. Um, now this is just to sort of show, ah, a random week during the year of 2018. Ah, this was right before the new editor came along just to kind of give you an idea of what kinds of cartoons I was doing during that week. So, this is the week of February 11th, 2018. This first cartoon is about the, the tax cuts that, that were passed. "Budget deficits are a mortal sin. They will inflict unthinkable pain and suffering on our grandkids. They will trigger the coming apocalypse." On the other hand, "Deficit exploding budget and tax cuts for the rich." So, you know, I love how the, the Republicans are always just, you know, like all, ahhh angry about, about deficits as if they're, you know, going to destroy the world but then when its to their advantage to have deficits they're like oh yeah, sure, fine. This was, ah, about Pennsylvania gerrymandering. You know, you guys are close enough to PA to understand this. Here's the elephant saying, um, "The Supreme Court says we have to redraw it. But it's a work of art." [Chuckle.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: And that is, of course, Picasso's Guernica about the, the Spanish War. Ah, here we have – oh, this was also the same week in February when the Winter Olympics were happening. So, here's, ah, a USA guy. Ah, they, they were in Korea and he says, "One Korea? Isn't that a bit naïve? You mean like United States?"

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.] [Groans.]

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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ROB ROGERS: See, now that's – you know, the thing about that cartoon is it's funny but it's true. It's just part – it's about the partisanship that we have going on in this country. But it's not actually taking one side or the other. Its just stating a fact. So, I do, you know, I was doing cartoons like that that were just sort of observational without being, you know, without taking one side or the other. Ah, this is a local comic, and I won't go through the whole thing with you but, um, but I would do – this is the mayor coming into, I, I should create this fictitious diner, ah, it was called "Brewed on Grant." Grant Street was where the mayor's office was. So, so they, he would come into the diner – there would be a comic strip every week, um – and this was about Act 47 being under the state regulation and so he's excited about that. But, um, it's, you won't get it so it won't –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: This was right after Rob Porter, ah, was fired for domestic abuse and, and of course it was just one in a line of people that Trump defended who was accused of that. So, I figured why not just start a shelter, you know, and, ah, for men battered by accusations of harassment, groping and domestic abuse including himself.

AUDIENCE: [Mumbling.]

ROB ROGERS: And he's saying, "Somebody has to defend due process." And then, of course, it was also the same week, ah, of the Parkland shooting which, you know, has become an all too common thing in America. Ah, so I drew this cartoon, "As American as baseball, apple pie, mass shootings, and failed leadership."

ROB ROGERS: So that was, that was the end of that week.

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AUDIENCE: [Mumbling.]

ROB ROGERS: Um, but that, that's sort of an average week. So, I would do everything from local politics to, you know, to gerrymandering, to, to gun shootings to, ah, taxes. Um, and then there was a, you know, there was a Trump one in there too. But, these are the Trump cartoons that actually made it into the newspaper, ah, while I was still working there. It's kind of amazing, some of them. Ah, this one is just about his tweeting, um, I think it's pretty self-explanatory.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: You know, nowadays I wouldn't draw this cartoon because I'm assuming he has some credibility to begin with in this cartoon. But, I, I really don't believe that anymore. Um, these are the Russian chess pieces; you have king, queen, bishop, knight, rook, and pawn.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.] [Groans.]

ROB ROGERS: Um, here's Nixon again. "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. And you would be..."

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: That was when he fired Comey. It's sort of like the Saturday Night Massacre back in Nixon's day. "See, I told you I'd build a wall." Ah, this is, this is a cartoon about Trump and his denial of climate change and denial of science basically. Um, there was a climate report that he just sort of poo-pooed and so I thought, well, if I drew him as a storm it would have to be a baby storm so it would be El Nino and there he is with his little twitter rattle, you know. This is the cartoon that I actually can't believe they published in the paper, but they did. Um, this was right after Charlottesville and my editor was a little nervous

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about it. He said, I don't think the publisher is going to go for it. And I just said, well, you know, do your best to convince him because I really feel strongly about this cartoon and I think it, it will be in my, you know, my, my entry of my Pulitzer package when I, when I do it next year.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: So, so I kind of bribed him to, to, to keep it in there. And he did but he wasn't happy about it. Um, this was right after Puerto Rico and, ah, of course Trump was golfing during the national emergency. But, ah, when he finally did go to Puerto Rico he just tossed paper towels. And, this was based on a famous photograph that somebody had taken of, of Trump from behind when he was golfing, and it was not a flattering photo to say the least. Um, "You're an unhinged childish nuclear despot with insane hair. I know you are, but what am I?"

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Yeah, I could do cartoons for days on these two. You know, they're just like [chuckle]. Ah, this was just, you know, this was just my homage to the famous – the "Jaws" poster from the 1970's that I loved, that movie – and um, and this was "Laws" and we have Trump swimming along and here comes, here comes –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – Jaws. But, you know, if, you know, this was drawn, you know, back in 2018 so now we might, we might, ah, we might call it Gums or something, you know, because it didn't have the teeth that we quite hoped it would, but ah. All right, so now to the killed cartoons. So, every cartoonist that, you know, who has ever drawn cartoons for a newspaper understands what it is

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to have cartoons killed. I would have one or two a year killed. And that's after maybe, you know, having several other's, you know, adjusted or, or, or changed something because, you know, I work with the publisher, I work with the editor trying to make the best cartoon I possibly can. But if he's not going to run it, you know, we had an arrangement that if, if they didn't like something they could kill it and I could still send it out for syndication. But I never wanted that to happen. I never wanted it not to be in the paper so I would try to do my best to change it if it could be changed. Um, but, one or two a year. Here's; they usually had to do with the Catholic Church in Pittsburgh because it's a very Catholic city. This was after the Boston pedophile scandal first was, came into, into the news. And they were also still looking for Osama Bin Laden at that time. So, here's Osama Bin Laden saying, "I heard this was a good place for evil-doers to hide."

AUDIENCE: [Groans.] [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Yeah, I know. [Chuckle.] You can see why this one didn't run.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Um, this was another cartoon, this was Benedict. When Benedict was, was talking, ah, he, he was giving Easter masses, but he was ignoring the Irish pedophile scandal. So, here I have the Bishop saying, "It's the annual hiding of the pedophile priests."

AUDIENCE: [Groans.]

ROB ROGERS: And you can see on the little eggs there's the priests, priest collars.

AUDIENCE: [Chuckles.]

ROB ROGERS: Ah, so, I got this one finished because originally it was, it

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was approved to go in the paper. And then, um, but just to give you an idea, it was supposed to run on Good Friday. So – [chuckle.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: So, when I opened, [chuckle], when I opened the paper the next morning it wasn't there, so.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: The nice thing is a week later it ran in *USA Today* as the top cartoon in their roundup. So, I was like totally excited. Um, this one actually did run but this gives you an idea of what kind of cartoons they would, they would put in. This was, ah, when Benedict and the, and the Vatican got their first Twitter account, here he is, "OMG, this 21st Century technology is great for spreading my 15th Century views on gays, women and contraception. LOL"

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: And then, wait for it – "#saytenhailmarys." [Chuckle.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: [Chuckle.] That one I, I, that was one of my favorites. I'm glad they, they ran that one. Um, this one is a little more controversial. It didn't get killed in Pittsburgh, but it was, ah, it was one that sort of struck a nerve in other places. So, this was when South Carolina was still using the Confederate Flag above their courthouse, or their, their State, State House. And so, I have a guy sitting there saying, "I like to look up the flagpole and see a symbol of our southern heritage hanging there. What's so wrong about that?"

AUDIENCE: [Groans.]

ROB ROGERS: Yeah. So, so this went through many editors in the newsroom and all of the African American reporters looked at it and, and

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everybody sort of had the same response. They sort of said ooh and then they –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – and then they said but it's a good cartoon. We should run it. So, so they all felt like it was worth the risk. It ran. It, it really got mostly just praise in the city but then it, it was syndicated to a small Christian university in Oklahoma City and it caused a stir. There, there, they had a, they had a big protest of all of the African American students, and they fired the editor and so, you know, it, it ended up having a, an effect somewhere else. But, ah, but it just shows you that that, it, it is a powerful image and it can have a powerful affect. Um, okay, now, back to present day or at least a year ago. Um, this was Memorial Day weekend and I was doing, ah, cartoons ahead of time to go out of town for a cartoon convention. And the first one I did was a Memorial Day cartoon, and I'll show you that one next, but, that one got killed and so I, I came up with this one which was about the NFL. And this was when the NFL decided, okay, we're not going to let anybody kneel anymore, you know, it's just bad for business or whatever they decided. But they decided this is their proclamation. So, I thought, okay, new penalties: illegal use of free speech; ah, flagrant disrespect for the troops; and prompted unnecessary rough tweets from Trump. And, you know, I thought okay, there's a little, little Trump reference there but they're not going to, they're not going to kill this because it has nothing really to do with Trump. But, because Trump was so involved with this whole NFL story and because it's about racism I guess that's why they killed it. So, they killed this one and then they had killed my original idea, which was this one here, Memorial Day 2018, "Truth, Honor and Rule of Law." Now, this one I kind of knew would, would not go over well with, especially with the new editor who had been killing

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cartoons. Now remember I told you, I would get one or two cartoons killed a year at the most. That's, that's over 12 months. This guy was there for three months as my editor and in that time he killed 18 cartoons. So, that gives you a sense of what was happening. Ah, but I was trying. I was, you know, like this one got killed. I tried to do the other one. They killed that one. So, then I get back from the convention. I'm working on the next days cartoon and, and it's about the Starbucks closing down for racial sensitivity training. And I thought, okay, well I'll do NFL closing down for racial ignorance training, you know, because I figured that was something that they would do. And, ah, no Trump reference, nothing, and still this one was killed. So, then I was getting confused. Um, the next day, ah, Roseanne Barr tweets, ah, some racist things and gets fired. So, I think, okay, well I said there's an obvious cartoon there so I drew the sketch and I kind of knew it wouldn't get, get picked up but it was a couple watching TV and the, the woman says, you know, "Despite the racist tweets I really like this sitcom. It says a lot about America." And the wife says, ah, "I'm sorry honey, that's, that's, that's not a sitcom." And they see that it's Trump on TV, right? So that was my first idea. They killed that one. And then I'm like, I don't know what to do. They're just killing my cartoons. And, they're not giving me an explanation. I'm asking for reasons; they're not telling me. So, then, she, she comes out later on the news and says, um, maybe it was the Ambien that made me tweet racist things, right? So, I'm like, okay, I can do that. So, I did this. Here's a guy, you know, a KKK guy sitting in the doctor's office and he says, "Could it be the Ambien?" You know. And, you know, it was just a simple cartoon about a simple issue just sort of like making an excuse for racist tweets and I thought surely they'll, they'll run this. And at first they said yes, it was on the page, it was

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approved. And then later the publisher came in and said no. And so, I think by that time he was just trying to send me a message of some sort. Next morning, I woke up and I wrote him a long letter and said what's going on, you know, why is this happening. Never heard back from him. Ah, but in the meantime after fretting about it all morning I realized, oh, gosh, I have to draw today because I don't want them to say I'm not doing my job. So, I quickly came up with this one and I figured I don't care if I draw Trump now because it's, it's in the news and, and Trump was, ah, separating children at the border so I did this one. And this ended up, you know, I did this really quickly, but this ended up being the cartoon that kind of went everywhere for me. And, a lot of people picked it up. And then finally, the last day of that week I drew this one about his pardons and, ah, you know, he was pardoning different people like Jack Johnson and, and Scooter Libby. So, I just thought, okay, he's, he's going to pardon people like Manafort and, um, so I did this one. It just seemed like a harmless cartoon, really. Ah, and, they killed that one. So, that was six in a row. Six cartoons in a row. So, by this time the media had picked up the story. They were asking me to comment. I, I said I can't comment because I'm still employed but they won't tell me why it's happening, you know. So, it was sort of a standoff. They weren't talking to me, um, but they were killing the cartoons. Um, we can talk more about; later we can ask, you know, when, when we open it up for Q and A we can talk more about what happened in the ensuing week and a half. But, eventually they did fire me. And, ah, and the first thing that happened was the *New York Times* called and said do you want to write about this? So, I wrote an article about it. And they asked me to do the drawing for it. So, the funny story here is that, um, you know, as an illustrator you, you, its different than being a political cartoonist that has

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free reign. As an illustrator you have people saying, you know, ah, art directors saying, ah, yes, no, maybe. And so, I told them the whole story. I said, you know, the, they, they want me to now start submitting, they wanted me to start submitting three sketches a day and they would approve which one they would use. And if not, they would come up with a better idea. That was what the *Post-Gazette* was suggesting. And so, I'm telling the *New York Times* this whole story and they're like, oh, that's great. Put that in the story, put that – that's great stuff. Now we need an image to go with this so could you give us three sketches –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: I swear to God. They, they were not even saying it as a joke. They, they really – and I was like, you've got to be kidding me? So anyway, of course they picked the one that I, you know, this was, I mean it was a good choice in, in the end but it was the one that I liked the least, you know. So, that, that, that's what happened. But, um, but that story ran, um, and then the NIB called which is, ah, an online comics format. And, they wanted me to do sort of a longform comic about my getting fired. So, I, I did this. Here, I'm only going to show you a few panels. It's in the book if, if you want to see it later. Um, "Donald Trump cost me my job." "You're fired." Okay, he didn't actually say that, but he might as well have. After 25 years as the political cartoonist for the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* I was fired in June for being too critical of the President. I started my career at the press in '84 and Reagan was running for his second term. And you can see there, I use the specialized Grecian formula for the, for the hair. This is the first time I've ever drawn my publisher who is in this cartoon, so. Ah, the *P-G* has always been a left-leaning paper. The publisher, John Robinson Block, mostly kept his politics to himself. Liberal rag. Ah, in 2015 that

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began to change. He was enamored with candidate Trump and started hinting about an endorsement. “What about the moral stands we’ve taken for decades? Nah, what do we know?” JR began to push back on my cartoons about The Donald. “Tell Rogers his cartoons don’t capture the intoxicating masculinity of Trump.” My editorial page editor who championed and defended me to management took a buyout in 2016 rather than endorse Donald Trump. “I’m so alone.” So that’s, those are the first two pages of it, but it goes on from there. It’s a 24-panel thing, and, ah. Um, and so, basically the beat goes on. Trump continues to be president despite me, you know, not wanting him to be president. But, um –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – ah, and, and really I’m continuing to do what I’ve done all along which is get up every morning and and be outraged so I have to say something and draw something. So, so I’m still syndicated. I, I, I draw three a week for syndication. I do freelance work now. I have, um, I have a, I have a patron page that, that where I can interact with the fans and show them rough sketches and different things like that, talk about the cartoons. Um, but, I’m still, I’m still working. So, here are some of the cartoons I’ve drawn since being fired. Um, and I just have a small sampling here. This was, ah, this was Colin Kaepernick, “Intentionally raised awareness about racial injustice; unintentionally raised awareness about human sex trafficking.” That’s Robert Kraft of the Patriots who was caught with. And now see here’s an artistic design thing. Since I had Kaepernick with the helmet I wanted to mirror the image so I had to think of what I could put in Robert Kraft’s arm that would be similar to a helmet. So, I came up with the, the giant jumbo bottle of massage oil.

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DR. HOFFMAN: Well, and I should say we have some, I something that I'd like to show as well. So, if you want to wrap up –

ROB ROGERS: Yes, I'm almost done. This is –

DR. HOFFMAN: Okay.

ROB ROGERS: – about, ah, the drug profits. "They're highly addictive. Side effects are lying. More lying." Here's one about the free press. Ah, "Sign a non-disclosure." Oh, this one I like just because of Bill Barr and the Mueller report and he's, he's saying, "Who needs the Secret Service."

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: This one was one of my favorites of the recent months. This was after the shooting in El Paso. And you know, there's been so many shootings where they've been repeating some of, ah, some of Trump's rhetoric. Now, the reason I want to show you this cartoon is just to show you how quickly things can change for, for a cartoonist. I drew this cartoon well before the, like two days before the, the whole Sharpiegate incident happened and here, here we have, "Climate is a hoax. FEMA funds will go to the wall. I've never heard of Category 5" even though there have been four Category 5 hurricanes during Trump's presidency. So, this was my cartoon about, basically about the hurricane and about his response to the hurricane. But then, he goes on and draws his own map, right? So, I'm just like come on, man. And, ah, so, "Somebody please take away his Sharpie." Here he is, "Alabama will be haunted by Dorian," "Polar bears," or "The ice caps are fine." "Here's my border fence." And then, finally, "People, people love me."

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: And then this is today's cartoon. I just thought I would

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include that. This is him saying, "We'll never forget until I'm president and I invite the Taliban to Camp David." So, there you go. Thank you.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

ROB ROGERS: Oh, one, one quick thing. We may not have Boss Tweed around anymore, but we do have Boss Trump –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – so that's why –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – that's why it's important to, to keep that in mind. All right. Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you so much.

ROB ROGERS: Sure.

DR. HOFFMAN: Please have a seat. Um, well, your book, which is available, ah, for sale in the lobby, ah, signed copies, is called *Enemy of the People*.

ROB ROGERS: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, you talk about the importance of satire in today's political climate. Satire has been important in all of the years of this democracy, right?

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, have there been other times in this country's history where you think cartoons and satire played a necessary role, something that really changed the course of things?

ROB ROGERS: I mean, I, you know, I think that, yeah, there were probably different centuries where this happened that I wasn't a part of but the most recent thing that comes to mind are the cartoons that were being drawn about the

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Vietnam War and about, ah, about Watergate. Um, I know that, you know, when I was in college I was looking back at some of those cartoons and, and sort of, you know, looking at how important they were in that, in that whole process. And I think that, ah, I think that even when you look at something like the McCarthy, ah, what, what Herb Block was doing. You know, Herb Block, you know, was singlehandedly saving the *Post* at that time because, because he was a famous cartoonist and he actually had to loan the *Washington Post* money to keep it afloat because he had more money than they did at the time. And, and they gave him, what they did was they ended up giving him, ah, you know, ah, shares in the stock and then of course he became incredibly wealthy. But, but anyway, yeah, I think, I think there's been many periods where satire has been very important. I also think, for instance, during the W years, um, something like the Daily Show has taken on a new role of importance because a lot of young people are getting their news from, ah, comedy. And, that's unfortunate because, you know, you would hope that, that the news deliverers that are out there would be better. But, but I think it just shows the importance of satire because it's sometimes easier to understand things and easier to swallow things when you hear it. And, and you also, you also get a sense that people, you know, I'm not the only one who thinks this is absolutely ridiculous. Look at, you know, looks what's happening. And, and, and then you laugh about it and, and you can get up the next morning.

DR. HOFFMAN: Right. So, so satire's important, I would agree. In my research that I've done shows that people, young and old, are confused right now in 2019 about what is satire, what is fake news, what is real news.

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

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DR. HOFFMAN: How can people, how can you help as an editorial, ah, cartoonist, political cartoonist help people distinguish what is real, what is satire, and what is fake. Do news outlets need to do a better job of explaining the role of editorial and opinion pages versus the rest of the news? I feel like a lot of people just don't understand that distinction.

ROB ROGERS: I, I think what's happening is it does seem to me like some, there is a, a portion of the population that has lost their sense of humor and lost the ability to laugh at themselves. And so, yes, in that regard, um, they're missing the whole picture of satire. But, but I do think that, you know, um, it's, it's incredibly important for, for news organizations especially ones that, you know, pride themselves on being, you know, the standard, to call out fake news and to also, also dispel the notion that anything that they don't agree with is fake news, which is what Trump is, is, is sort of pushing and the, and the Republicans have been pushing. So, I think it's important to make that distinction. Yes, it's very important. And I think what, what cartoonists can do is just to keep hammering away at the ridiculousness of what's happening right now so that we all can feel sane.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, ah, one of my students, Katie, from, ah, our National Agenda class – there's a course associated with this class – and they have to ask, ah, they're required to propose questions. She asked, I thought, a pretty compelling question. If you could go back in time and change the content of your art to align more with the vision of the publisher and the editor would you or do you feel like you're better off having left?

ROB ROGERS: Oh, no, absolutely better off. I mean, I think that what was going to happen if I hadn't been fired is that I would have had to have worked

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under the conditions that I'd been working under for three months, and, you know, just ask my wife, she said, [chuckle], she said I've never seen anybody who loves their work more than you but I've also never seen anybody who in the last three months is more miserable. So, so it had, it was definitely having an affect on me and I, I, I definitely got a sense that, you know, if this hadn't happened then it would have happened eventually down the road. But, no, I, I'm, I'm very happy that I, you know, I, I, it's not that I took a stand, its just that I, that I actually had, you know, something that I believed in that I didn't want to change. So.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, let's go back to the history of cartoons. Um, this is a cartoon you published related to what you just discussed earlier with Boss Tweed

—

ROB ROGERS: Right. Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: — um, and how Thomas Nast in the last 1800's early 1900's was a really important political cartoonist in the 19th Century and the series of cartoons he drew exposing this corrupt Tweed Ring – is anyone familiar with this story –

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: — um —

ROB ROGERS: Tammany Hall, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: — Tammany Hall contributed to the group's ultimate indictment and became —

ROB ROGERS: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: — a landmark in the history of journalistic crusades against corruption in the government. In your cartoon, ah, you said, he says, "Stop these

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damn pictures." Oops.

ROB ROGERS: Oh, yeah. Um –

DR. HOFFMAN: What did I do here? Oh no, I'm going the wrong direction just like you did.

ROB ROGERS: Yeah, I see. I, I –

DR. HOFFMAN: You're not the only one.

ROB ROGERS: I'm not the only one. [Laughter.] Oh, the animation –

DR. HOFFMAN: [indiscernible] this.

ROB ROGERS: – is not working on it. Um –

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, I think the animation is not working.

ROB ROGERS: So, yeah, the animation –

DR. HOFFMAN: What was the –

ROB ROGERS: So, the, the caption here is, ah, "Finally a newspaper I can get behind." You know, like, and –

DR. HOFFMAN: Right, and so –

ROB ROGERS: – and this was –

DR. HOFFMAN: This is a result –

ROB ROGERS: – this was a –

DR. HOFFMAN: – of the *New York Times International Edition* –

ROB ROGERS: Right,

DR. HOFFMAN: – saying that they are no longer publishing political cartoons.

What does that say about the future of political cartoons?

ROB ROGERS: Ah, it's, it, it says that people in positions of power, especially, you know, publishers of, are, are becoming more afraid. And they're afraid to have opinions, they're afraid to express opinions in the paper because

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they think that by dumbing down the newspaper somehow they're going to sell more copies or they're going to get into less trouble. But it also, it also has to do with pressure from investors. So, if, like I don't know what their situation was at the *New York Times International Edition* but if they were having pressure from investors or advertisers or, you know, there's a lot of people that could come in and say, you know, hey, no we don't want to do this, um. So, one thing I want to say about Tweed that I didn't finish the story of, is the reason that, that his cartoons are so amazing is Tweed eventually went – I mean, ah –

DR. HOFFMAN: Nast.

ROB ROGERS: – Nast, ah, ah, yeah, Tweed eventually went to jail and for his crimes. He escaped prison and he went overseas and he was working on a ship in Spain and somebody recognized him from the Thomas Nast cartoon, and, from the caricature and so that shows you what a, what an important thing a cartoon can be because when they recognized him they arrested him and brought him back and he served out his, his, well, he died in prison. But, um, but yeah, that was a pretty remarkable story. I don't think that's ever happened to one of my cartoons but [laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Let's hope maybe.

ROB ROGERS: Yeah, maybe.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, so, let's look at a few of your more recent, ah, cartoons.

ROB ROGERS: Okay.

DR. HOFFMAN: And, I'm going to ask, um, one of my colleagues if – one of the things I asked you on the way over here is perhaps if we could bring out a

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sketchbook and a Sharpie –

ROB ROGERS: Oh. Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: I think we forgot to bring one out.

ROB ROGERS: Oh.

DR. HOFFMAN: But if one of my colleagues –

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – might be able to do that between our, my conversation and before we open up the Q and A at 8:30? We were thinking of drawing a caricature of maybe one particularly important Delaware native.

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Delaware, ah –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – ah, folks. So, um –

ROB ROGERS: Who goes by the name of Uncle Creepy, is that [laughter] –

DR. HOFFMAN: No.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: No, I'm kidding.

DR. HOFFMAN: Not in Delaware.

ROB ROGERS: [Indiscernible] I'm kidding, I'm kidding.

DR. HOFFMAN: Not in Delaware, no.

ROB ROGERS: No, not here. Not here, not here.

DR. HOFFMAN: Not here.

AUDIENCE: [Chatter.]

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

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DR. HOFFMAN: All right. I'm going to move forward to, ah, an, a, cartoon that my students are particularly, ah, thought was particularly profound. Um, so this is a cartoon with, ah, looking at, um, ICE versus, ah, 1969 when we were walking on the moon.

ROB ROGERS: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: This is a, a very different experience than we've had, um, in, in previous years. So, what is it about this image that my students found particularly powerful? What makes it so meaningful? What thoughts go into your decision making, ah, once you've come up with this idea? The mirroring image I think –

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – is really powerful from an artistic perspective and I'm curious how you came up with that.

ROB ROGERS: Well, this is another one that, that kind of popped into my head right away because what you, what you have here is, you know, the TV coverage of that particular event, um, when it was hitting, you know – when it was what is it the 50th anniversary, is that right, yeah – um, they, you know, they were doing all of these sort of love stories on the news about this, this time in history. And of course, we always look back on things and think oh, if only we were [indiscernible] during that time again. But, but I think they were juxtaposing it. What they were all saying without actually saying it on the news was, yeah, compared to now? I mean, look what's going on now. So, I immediately thought of the two images, you know, just like I thought, okay, the image of him standing there with the flag, iconic, what's the, what's the new iconic image? And, and that's what made me think of the.

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DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I think another thing that, that I definitely thought of when I invited you here was in, ah, 2015 we saw the, um, tragedy at *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, which, ah, was just four years ago, left 12 people dead –

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – who worked for a French satirical magazine. Can you remind us why they were targeted and talk just a little bit about the international support that became your cartoon –

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – “Je Suis Charlie”?

ROB ROGERS: Yeah. So, that was, that was one of the worst horrible worst things that had ever happened in, in our small community of editorial cartooning. So, um, *Charlie Hebdo* is a magazine, a satirical magazine in Paris and they do a lot of outrageous stuff. And so, most of the cartoonists that I know would admit that, you know, there are some pornographic stuff with the Pope doing things to different politicians and, you know, there is all kinds of crazy, ah, over the top, you know, pushing the envelope kinds of cartoons. Cartoons that I would never draw. But that doesn't mean that they shouldn't have the right to be able to draw them and the people found them funny and the magazine was supported and everything else. So, it was just tragic when that happened and, and everybody knows the story, but, um, but there was an immediate outpouring from the entire world of cartooning and, and of course the entire world as well. But everybody realizing that speech is, is powerful. This kind of speech is powerful, cartooning. And, in some instances, like this one it comes with a price. And, that's unfortunate.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, let's move on to, um, another image here. Ah, so this is

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the transatlantic mitosis –

ROB ROGERS: Oh, right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – cartoon that came out recently. And, um, before I reveal the whole thing, ah, I, I think it was great that you sent me these images piece by piece. I think it's important to kind of be able to differentiate between one frame from the next. But one of my students who asked in class today, Mandy, was asking, you know, do people need to come at these cartoons with a particular sense of political knowledge or they can –

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – can they get what's happening just from the pictures? So, we'll start here.

ROB ROGERS: Okay.

DR. HOFFMAN: So maybe you can walk us through –

ROB ROGERS: Yeah. So, um, so this is, this is sort of Trump in cellular form [chuckle]. Ah, you know, just, just sort of being in the fluid of chaos and, and misogyny and racism and isolationism and lies. I didn't, I didn't, I didn't remember to put misogyny up there, sorry. Um, but, anyway yeah, it's, it's sort of his, you know, primordial stew whatever, whatever you want to think, say, and how we've seen this, we've seen what's happening with Trump happening in other places including the UK. So, the next one you see they start to separate, you know, like, like mitosis and eventually you end up with, with Boris Johnson and, ah, Brexit. And, and so yes, in this particular case, if you had not heard about Brexit or Boris Johnson you might, you might look at this and be confused. Why are there two Trumps, you know? Um, but, hopefully the caricature is good enough that you would recognize it's not Trump but it's somebody that looks a

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little like Trump.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, what I wonder though is that could some people be turned off by this because they don't know the wonky history behind it. And if you think about a lot of political cartoons and you –

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – you've had to give some context behind some of the one's you've mentioned tonight, they're really ephemeral, like, they're –

ROB ROGERS: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: – very much based on what's happening in that time. And like –

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – you kind of forget, oh yeah, George W. Bush said this.

ROB ROGERS: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: Or, Barack Obama said that. So, are you concerned at all that, like, that, a couple of things; that people won't understand them, and that there won't be a historical sort of like when people look at them in the future that they will understand what it actually meant.

ROB ROGERS: Yeah, I mean, that, that is a, a, a definite point because I, I've gone to the cartoon research library in, in, at Ohio State and, and at the Library of Congress, both places, and I've looked at old cartoons and some of them are confusing. You know? You're like, what was this about?

DR. HOFFMAN: Right.

ROB ROGERS: Um, so that is a concern but it's also part of what we do. I mean, we're, we're there to sort of hit the moment and hit the zeitgeist of what's happening right then and there, and everybody knew what was going on with

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Boris Johnson for the most part. So, if somebody saw this cartoon that wasn't somebody following me already, you know, on Twitter or Facebook or, you know, if this had been in the newspaper which, [chuckle] you know, it wasn't this time. But if, you know, if somebody had opened a newspaper they would usually open that paper knowing what's happening in the news because they, they're following my cartoons or they're following the editorial page. So, generally, that's why I didn't label them. I, I, you know, I could have put like Boris and I could have put –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

ROB ROGERS: – ah – I didn't, did I? Okay, good – [chuckle] I could have put Trump and Boris, but I figured, you know, these, this is happening right now. Everybody's hearing about it. So, yes, you do have to have a certain amount of, of, you know, current events knowledge to, to get into it. But I think it's, I think it's safe to say that if you don't, if people don't know that then they're probably not looking at the cartoons. You know? If they're, they're not interested in the cartoons if they don't have a sense of what's happening. And if they do have a sense and just don't get this one they can look it up. I mean, that's what I do. When I see a cartoon I, this has happened to me recently actually. Somebody, some of these stories come up so fast on, on Facebook. I'll be working on a cartoon all day and I will not have heard about something that happened and somebody will do a cartoon, you know, and put it out immediately and I'll be like, what is that? [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, and that, that brings me to a question that I, I meant to bring up earlier which is, like, are memes the new cartoons?

ROB ROGERS: No. [Laughter.]

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DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Please –

DR. HOFFMAN: No.

ROB ROGERS: – do not say that. No, they, they are, they are, I think that memes and political cartoons are, you know, are sort of in the same, you know, genetic family even though the meme is sort of the, you know, the, the illegitimate –

DR. HOFFMAN: Repurposing –

ROB ROGERS: – stepchild.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.] Um, but, but yeah, that's what memes are, they're political cartoons. And, and I think that now that we have a, a, a you know, a, a platform where anybody can do it, you know, they can just post a photograph and put a text. You know, any, anybody can be a political cartoonist. So that makes it tougher for us because we're fighting against the memes and, and the, the cat videos [chuckle] and, you know, all the, the little things that people –

DR. HOFFMAN: All the cats.

ROB ROGERS: – are putting up. Yeah. So many cats –

DR. HOFFMAN: So many cats.

ROB ROGERS: – so little time.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, ah, I only have a couple of more minutes left before we hand it over. This was another cartoon that, um, really, ah, felt powerful to me. This is, um, I'm really curious more than anything, ah, how a political cartoonist

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consumes news and tries to interpret it through satire in 2019. You talked about in class today kind of fire hydrant of information –

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.] Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – being, being –

ROB ROGERS: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – thrown at you and, um, I, I was wondering as with many things in the Trump Administration if, as we often hear, like, if Obama had done this – we keep hearing this kind of like –

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum

DR. HOFFMAN: – well if Obama had done this. If Obama had met with, ah, a North Korean dictator –

ROB ROGERS: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – there would probably have been a different response –

ROB ROGERS: Oh, he would have –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Indiscernible.]

ROB ROGERS: – been impeached in five minutes. And he would have been out, you know? I mean –

DR. HOFFMAN: So –

ROB ROGERS: Seriously.

DR. HOFFMAN: – so what went through your mind as you processed this incident?

ROB ROGERS: So, I, you know, I, I had, up to this point I had done many cartoons about, you know, Kim Jong-un and, and, and Trump and I had done some about, ah, Putin and Trump, and I even did one that I don't, didn't have in the show but it was a, a, a romance comic, you know, with, with ah, Trump

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kissing Kim Jong-un and, and Putin is off to the side thinking oh no, you know, my, my, my, you're supposed to be with me. You know, so, so there's this weird thing that he has with dictators but when I saw – so, so that's, that's bad enough, right? But when I saw him go to the DMZ and do a photo op –

DR. HOFFMAN: The demilitarized zone.

ROB ROGERS: Yeah, demilitarized zone. There is no, I mean, he's giving this guy the credibility of an American presidency and, and – Kim Jong-un – and he does not deserve it. I mean, he, he is a brutal dictator who murders his own people, starves his own people, and he is developing nuclear weapons to take out allies. And so, here he is giving him, ah, you know, the platform, the stage, the national, the, the world stage, ah, and legitimizing him. And that to me is, is egregious. Now, I, I added in this, sort of this idea that they're stepping over the line to the demilitarized zone of, of supporting a murderous dictatorship and that's what we're doing. So.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, um, before we jump into questions here, I found this quote from Salman Rushdie whose fourth novel, the Satanic Verses, was the subject of a major controversy, as a lot of us probably know, provoking protests from Muslims in several countries, death threats were made against him including a fatwah for his assassination –

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – um, issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989. Um, he said in 2012 in a *New Yorker* article that “art is not entertainment. At its very best it’s a revolution.”

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: And I wonder if, do political cartoonists from these different

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backgrounds, different ethnicities, different geographies, do they face different threats, um, in this field of cartooning? How do, and how do cartoonists support each other in varying democratic and autocratic regimes?

ROB ROGERS: Well, believe it or not there are, there are organizations that reach out and try to help cartoonists in other countries, um, it's, um, the Cartoonists Rights Network in, in Washington, D.C. and, and my organization that I belong to, the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists, we support them. Ah, every year we bring in a cartoonist of courage and we give them an award from, if, if they can make it. Sometimes they have to do it remotely because they're in hiding or they're in jail. Um, but, I mean, there are so many examples. There's, there's the, the Syrian cartoonist who was, who had his hands broken so he wouldn't draw anymore cartoons. There's, obviously *Charlie Hebdo*. There's so many examples. And Iranian woman who was drawing the parliament as animals, she got a, a year in jail for that. And, ah, so, so we, you know, even though this is, has been a difficult year for me and, ah, and kind of living through this, I, I also know that I'm still in a country where at least we have the semblance of freedom and I'm not in jail. So that's good.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Well, before we toss it to questions from the audience and I'll ask, ah, Justin and Charlotte to go ahead and get that Catchbox ready to go. We have a cool feature where we have a box that you can throw around, um, and our two students from my class and our intern are going to, um, basically help you engage in a conversation so you'll be able to toss the box around to each other and ask questions. But I figured while we're getting that ready, um, it looks like we do have our –

ROB ROGERS: Do we have –

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DR. HOFFMAN: – sketchbook off stage.

ROB ROGERS: Oh, okay.

DR. HOFFMAN: And, a, it looks like –

ROB ROGERS: Oh, great. Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Are those your markers?

ROB ROGERS: Oh, you found these. That's right. That's great.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right.

ROB ROGERS: Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Perfect. Well, I was thinking in between this Q and A – I, I know it's a huge sketchpad – um –

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – but I'm thinking –

ROB ROGERS: That's all right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – since you're in Delaware and you do caricatures –

ROB ROGERS: Yes. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – of politicians –

ROB ROGERS: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – could you show us the process of doing a caricature of former Vice President Joe Biden?

ROB ROGERS: I can, I can try. Yes, I, I – do you have your, ah, this your, is that your iPad? Can you bring – I left my phone back in the –

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh, sure.

ROB ROGERS: – in the Green Room. Can you put up a picture of him?

DR. HOFFMAN: I can.

ROB ROGERS: Um, so, yeah, I was drawing him –

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DR. HOFFMAN: So, do you work from pictures primarily?

ROB ROGERS: Yeah. With people that I haven't drawn, um, over and over.

Well here, I'll start with – you know somebody that I can draw in my sleep now because I've drawn him so many times is, is George, well, Trump, but you've seen enough of Trump. So, I'll draw, um, I'll draw George W. Bush. Can you see this? I'll turn it around once I – but as I said, the caricature started, started to get so his eyes were like really close together, you know, and really beady, and his nose sort of had that almost like a bird beak feeling. And that's kind of how his, his father's nose was too. And then the eyebrows got a little bit thicker and a little bit thicker 'til finally they were kind of like, you know, one of the Muppets.

[Laughter.] You know? And then, ah, and then, you know, the, the mouth sort echoed the nose and, you know, always sort of a downturned mouth even when he was smiling. If he was smiling I would make it go up like this, but it was still that little pointy thing there. Um, and then, yeah, but I drew him for eight years and, and through two wars that, ah, we didn't really need to be in. And now, we're trying to get out of the second one. Um, but, ah, there was a lot to draw with him. I mean a lot. And he has the jowls and then of course, you know, the thing that, you know, he did, his ears stuck out just slightly but not that much, you know. Not that much. It's just that when a cartoonist starts to go a certain place –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – then the next time they say oh, that looks good; I'm going to keep going. And then, you know, eventually it was like this. You know? So, the ears became these sort of missiles, you know, like, like –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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ROB ROGERS: The military could use them. But, if only he listened to the American people with those ears, right?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

ROB ROGERS: Can you see it?

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Um, okay, so I'll, I'll –

DR. HOFFMAN: The only picture of Biden I could find –

ROB ROGERS: Oh, there you go. That's perfect. That's perfect –

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh –

ROB ROGERS: – right there.

DR. HOFFMAN: – wonderful.

ROB ROGERS: That's perfect. Okay.

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh, thank you.

ROB ROGERS: Yeah. Thank you to the guys in the booth. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: I was going to show the one of me with Joe Biden
[indiscernible] –

ROB ROGERS: Oh, you have one of you and Joe Biden.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well –

ROB ROGERS: Oh, wow.

DR. HOFFMAN: – it was on this stage –

ROB ROGERS: Oh, there you go.

DR. HOFFMAN: [indiscernible] appeared –

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ROB ROGERS: Wow.

DR. HOFFMAN: – with John Kasich but that's a better picture. [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Yeah. So, with him –

DR. HOFFMAN: So, tell me what the –

ROB ROGERS: Oops. Oh, those are your –

DR. HOFFMAN: These are the one's from earlier.

ROB ROGERS: Those are earlier. Oh, yeah –

DR. HOFFMAN: Yes.

ROB ROGERS: – you have one, Joe Biden, the one there.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: But, ah, oh, good. Look at that. I can, I can turn around and do this like this. Um, so the thing about Joe is, you know, he's got, he's got a high forehead there, ah, and then, you know, he's got, he's got his nice row of, ah, hair plugs there that go across and then –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – ah. The nice thing is that, you know, they've all turned white so they, it kind of blends in. Ah, and then you've got, ah, you know, a little bit of, he keeps it a little bit longer on the sides, you know. Um, and then, and then the eyes, you know, he's, he is, I will say that he is somebody who smiles all the time. So, he's sort of, I mean, that's kind of his thing, you know, he, he just seems like he's always happy. So, his eyes become these sort of like squinting half-moons, you know, like that. Ah, and of course in this picture he has the nice crow's feet going on there too. Um, the eyebrows, um, and then –

DR. HOFFMAN: What I found most noticeable when he was doing this in class today was like you already can tell who that is. Right?

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ROB ROGERS: Yeah. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Just from the eyebrows and the eyes.

ROB ROGERS: And then, and then, of course, his, the thing that defines him the most is that, that smile. Now, he's not smiling quite as, as wide here as the picture we found earlier but, you know, he's got this, you know, this amazing, ah, ability to show, show his teeth, you know? [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: And, you know, just to, just to, so you know what those are I'll put that there. And then, um, and then of course, um –

DR. HOFFMAN: So, you're still working on the chin.

ROB ROGERS: – a little chin. Yeah, the chin, I'm, I'm still trying to figure where his chin goes. Its not quite a, a Bill Clinton chin, but it's not, it's a little bit more like Obama's chin, I guess. Although Obama's chin's a little bit longer than that. He's got the ears. And then of course, um, and then of course you have to have the hands reaching over the shoulders –

AUDIENCE: [Groans.] [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.] Now, [chuckle], now who do we want to be, who, who should we put in, in the, you know, I didn't leave much room here, but I guess we could make it, ah –

DR. HOFFMAN: You can put me in there.

ROB ROGERS: You could put – [laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: Okay, all right.

DR. HOFFMAN: That's fine.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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DR. HOFFMAN: I'm fine with that.

ROB ROGERS: All right.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: I'm going to draw like a mini version of you because –

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh, my God.

ROB ROGERS: – I didn't leave enough room for your –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – where; so, your head's going to be really tiny so don't, don't, don't, ah –

DR. HOFFMAN: I do have a tiny head, so that's okay.

ROB ROGERS: – don't, don't get mad at me for that.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: It's, its, I'm not saying anything about your heard, you know, really.

AUDIENCE: [Shouting comments.]

ROB ROGERS: What's that?

AUDIENCE: [Indiscernible].

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Groans.]

ROB ROGERS: Bloody eyes. What?

DR. HOFFMAN: I don't know. So, while [chuckle], while we finish this up and hopefully – is our photographer still here? Um, maybe, yes. That would be great if you could take a, we can do it afterwards too if, if that's easier. But, um, but let's open this up. We've got about 21 minutes left for a Q and A.

ROB ROGERS: Yeah.

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DR. HOFFMAN: So, Charlotte and Justin, please come to the front and anyone and everyone raise your hand if you have a question for this political cartoonist.

ROB ROGERS: And here he is, Uncle –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – Uncle Joe.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.] See, I made you tiny. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: It works. [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: At least he's not sniffing her hair, you know, so that's –

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh, my goodness.

AUDIENCE: [Groans.]

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: You are harsh.

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.] I know I'm harsh.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: There you go.

DR. HOFFMAN: This is the life of a political cartoonist –

ROB ROGERS: Listen –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.] [Applause.]

ROB ROGERS: – listen –

DR. HOFFMAN: – huh?

ROB ROGERS: – I drew, I drew Joe Biden back when he made all those

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gaffes, um, you know, in the 1988 election where he, he miss, you know, he started, you know, stealing quotes from other, other, ah, campaign speeches. So, I, I, I've drawn him for a long time but, but now he's back in it again. He's going to get; he's going to get some heat.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: He's definitely going to get some heat this time around because he's the front runner, so, we'll see what happens –

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

ROB ROGERS: – but, um.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. We have our first question.

Q: Hi there.

ROB ROGERS: Yes. Oh, somebody has the Catchbox.

DR. HOFFMAN: Talk into the, talk into it. [Laughter.]

Q: So, I, ah –

ROB ROGERS: Oh, it's an actual microphone.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: – [indiscernible] strange?

ROB ROGERS: That's cool.

Q: I listened to your interview on NPR and one thing that struck me tonight, um, that was different or new was, ah, you talked about college newspapers who have syndicated your cartoon who, the editors have gotten fired. What did that mean to you? How did you feel about that?

ROB ROGERS: I was upset about it because I felt like, um, you know, this was, you know, in, in, when I, when I did some research, when I, when I emailed the, when I read the story about what happened and when I emailed the woman

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who started the protest that, that, that, um, ended up getting this poor kid fired who was just this, like, you know, student editor –

DR. HOFFMAN: I hadn't heard about this.

ROB ROGERS: Um – oh, this was back in the 90's – but, but the problem was, um, there had been other racial incidents on campus, racial insensitivity on part of the, on part of the, the, the management, I mean the whatever you call it, the Board of, you know, Regents or whatever it is. So, it wasn't the first time but, but this, this, this one cartoon, um, apparently for this woman, this grad student that, that was upset by it was too much. And, and her point wa ,well, showing a lynching even in that form was, is, is just horrible; you shouldn't do it. You know, I disagreed with her because I felt like if we don't look at these things we don't look at our history, we don't look at who we were, and change from it. And, um, and, what she said to me was, she said, well, what if somebody were reading that editorial page and then said to themselves yeah, a lynching, that's a good idea. And I thought, and I said to her, I said, well, first of all I don't think the kind of people that would be lynching, you know, African Americans, would ,would be reading the editorial page of a, of a college newspaper [chuckle] for one. Secondly, um, they already think that way. They're not, they're not going to look at the cartoon and get the idea from the cartoon, so. And, and the, and the third thing is, you know, the cartoon's message was the opposite of that. So, um, but, you know, her point was well taken. It's just that I thought that she overreacted to in, in how, you know, how it happened. But, but it happens on a lot of, a lot of campuses where people get upset about something and they, and they have a protest and somebody either gets disinvited from coming to the campus or, or, you know, or somebody else gets fired. You know, it's, it's, um, it's a touchy time

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right now and that, that was, you know, 20 years ago. But, ah –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum. Yeah, and we deal with that here. It's, um, and we pride ourselves as a university that's based on open inquiry and, ah, free –

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – and open expression. So, and that's part of what we do here at National Agenda and, um, and just as we're hearing from the left we'll be hearing from the right, um, in future conversations particularly with Chris Christie I think will be an interesting one to come to. That is, ah, November 6th.

ROB ROGERS: Oh, [chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So –

ROB ROGERS: [Indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: No, [indiscernible.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.] I was going to show, show my drawing of Chris Christie [indiscernible.] [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, do we have another question?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] Charlotte, there's one way in the back there.

ROB ROGERS: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: And then maybe we'll jump back over to Justin.

Q: Thank you. So, um, that story was of an instance where someone else thought one of your, one of your cartoons went too far.

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

Q: Do you have any that stand out in your long career as a

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cartoonist that you would take back given the opportunity?

ROB ROGERS: Ah, actually, you know, one of the, one of the benefits of having good editors is those were all taken back for me. So, for instance, I, I, I, there were a couple where I went a little too far and it was either, you know, the, the picture was too, ah, you know, like, maybe I was showing a massacre or something and, and the editor said, well, you know, that might not be the best way to get that point across so I came up with a better idea. So, in other words, I, I, there, there are, when I look back at most of the cartoons that I've drawn there are definitely some where I say, where I say to myself that drawing isn't very good, or, I could have punched up that punch line a little more, or. But, I don't really have any that I think oh my gosh I shouldn't have said that. Um, more, more, what, what happens to me more when I look back at them is I think, wow, how did I get away with that, [laughter], you know? I'm surprised that, that, that they let me run that. Um, one, one thing that comes to mind is during the Iraq war, or no, I'm sorry; during the Afghanistan war when we first started bombing, um, you know, I was doing cartoons about the people, you know, in Afghanistan, like, the women and children who are waiting for these food drops from, from, you know, the charity organizations and, and the bombs are coming down and, and the woman says to the child, remember, just catch the food only, you know, and not the bombs. You know. And, my editor called me in, and he said do you know that we're, you know, we're in favor of this war in Afghanistan even though you're drawing; and I said, yeah, I know. And he's like, okay, just making sure you knew.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: And he was fine with it. You know, that, at that point it was

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okay because they knew that, you know, we were going to differ from time to time even on something like that. But, yeah, more, more, it's more about sort of realizing that I, I was, I was very privileged to be working there because I was getting, getting stuff in that other cartoonists might not have.

DR. HOFFMAN: Let's take a question from this side?

Q: Hi. Um, I was kind of – on a lighter note –

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

Q: – I was wondering, um, how much you had to, like, practice your signature to get it that –

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

Q: – distinctive? No, like genuinely.

ROB ROGERS: No, this is, this is, that's a good question. Um –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Indiscernible.] [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: – you know, when I was in college I was fascinated with, ah, ah, I didn't really want to be a political cartoonist when I was younger. I wanted to be a cartoonist. I, I, you know, I had, I had been drawing, you know, the comics out of the Sunday funnies. I could, I could do a, a really good Peanuts, you know, Snoopy and Charlie Brown, and um, and then later – I made up my own stories and would keep little notebooks – and then later on I, I ended up, um, wanting to work for *Mad Magazine* or something like that. So, then I get into college and I go to the paper and say, you know, I have these cartoons that I've drawn for different things; would you ever need illustrations? And they, and it, it just happened that they said, well, actually we need a cartoonist, an editorial cartoonist and I was like, okay. I'll try that. So, then once they, you know, once the cartoon, the first cartoon made a big stir and everybody was like, ooh, you

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know. And I thought, ooh, this is, this is cool. So, I, so then I started researching and seeing like, I suddenly saw all of these signatures, you know, and I thought oh, I've got to work on my signature [laughter]. So, I did. I practiced it for a long time until it, until it got just, just right. Um, and even when I started at the paper it wasn't, it wasn't quite that, um, you know, well, that's not a good one, but, but yeah, you can see it on my cartoons. Um, I can do it pretty fast when I'm drawing it in, in the paper. But, I remember one early on, my first year that I was working there. My editor comes in and I'm, and I'm, and I've got the whole cartoon laid out, it's all penciled in, everything is penciled in, and I am starting with the signature down in the corner, you know, [indiscernible] inking, inking in with a brush. And, the editor comes in and says, it figures you'd start with your signature; you know you're spending half your time on that; why don't you spend some more time on the drawing, you know? [Laughter.] So, anyway. So, yeah –

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, and, and if you do want to purchase one of, ah, his books which I have here –

ROB ROGERS: [Chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – um, they're out in the lobby and his signature is in the front of them except, all except for mine. So –

ROB ROGERS: Oh, I haven't signed yours yet, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: You need to, you need to do mine, okay?

ROB ROGERS: Okay. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

ROB ROGERS: With a little drawing of, of, Uncle Joe.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, of course.

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ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, all right. Well, I think, ah, in the light of, of time I'm going to, um, do a little bit of what is something new for National Agenda which is called Doc Hoff's Quick Take. I keep telling people that I'm trying to get this to catch on. I think a couple of my students have finally, have been like, okay, if that's what you want, I'll call you Doc Hoff. Fine. Um, but it's –

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – ah, it's, you know, it's a way of being like a little more personal but also like, I've got a PhD so, like, you know, call me Doctor. So –

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – so, this week I have been thinking about the state of journalism in 2019, and I have an image up here, um, about a new initiative out of a, a local paper in Mansfield, Ohio. Um, and, they are doing these listening posts, ah – six listening posts, ah, from between, they started on Monday and they're doing through October 14th – an election listening tour called "Talk the Vote". And this is a membership only newspaper. There are about five years in and they do not take subscriptions. So, it's a new model for really, like, local, local journalism. And being from, or having gotten my degree from The Ohio State University, um –

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – I have a, a close connection with Ohio. And, what this made me, reminded me of, this is my quick take, is everything 90's is kind of back again. Right? Like, fanny packs, I saw a fanny pack –

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

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DR. HOFFMAN: – today; crop tops; ah, you know, you name it, acid washed jeans. And, when I was a student about your guys age, my students here, um, in the late 90's as a journalism student at the University of Kentucky, there was this fad called civic journalism or public journalism. And, I was fascinated by this idea. I thought it was really amazing. It's basically the idea of bringing people together, ah, bringing people in the community together with journalists with news media – radio, television, newspapers – to have forums to say what is that you want to know.

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: The question here says, ah, what, what do you want the candidates to be talking about as they compete for votes instead of dictating the horserace. Today the *Washington Post* just came out with a horserace, ah, um, head to head coverage of Biden versus Trump and all these things.

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum

DR. HOFFMAN: And it's, it's frankly not very useful for a lot of citizens to –

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – be thinking about what issues matter to them. So, I, I think I kind of want to just conclude by saying, like, I'm all for the 90's, I'll even take the Mom jeans back, like –

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – I'm, I'm good, I'm good with the 90's. I think that journalists need to own up to their duties to really give citizens what they need to know. This is a very difficult media environment to navigate – Fake News, satire, we talked about these things. So, I think what local journalists in particular can do is, is really engage with their communities and ask them what is that you need

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to know in order to vote. So, that's my Quick Take. Ah, I want to end with saying that we have our, ah, annual, um, audio essay contest. Ah, this year the theme is "Speak Up"; um, its open to University of Delaware students. Prizes, students.

ROB ROGERS: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: These are good, right? Money? Um, I remember that being important. It's actually kind of still probably important as a professor. Um, but we want you to tell your story. Ah, our next speaker is, um, the third of our more left leaning speakers out of all of our speakers. His name is Jamelle Bouie. He rights for the *New York Times*. He's a cultural columnist. Um, if you have been following the 1619 Project in the *New York Times*, he has written for this.

ROB ROGERS: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: I don't know if you've looked at that at all.

ROB ROGERS: Yes. Yes, it was fabulous. Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, so he will be here on September 25th. So, we have a week off until our next, ah, ah, speaker. And, ah, really I just want to say thank you guys so much for being here. And I hope to see you again. Thank you, Rob Rogers.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.] [Cheers.]

ROB ROGERS: Thank you.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Don't forget your pens.

ROB ROGERS: Oh, yeah. And I'll, I'll stick around if anybody wants me to sign their book. Ah –

DR. HOFFMAN: We'll come back out in the front.

ROB ROGERS: – or we'll come out there, yeah.

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DR. HOFFMAN: I ended early.

ROB ROGERS: No, that's fine.

DR. HOFFMAN: I –

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