



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE  
NATIONAL AGENDA 2022  
“Politics by the Numbers”

**Denise Lu and Tailyr Irvine**  
“*Balancing Arts & Politics*”

HOSTED BY University of Delaware –  
Center for Political Communication

PARTICIPANTS

- Dr. Lindsay Hoffman Director of National Agenda and Associate Director of the Center for Political Communication, University of Delaware
- Denise Lu Graphics editor at *The New York Times*, Lu creates interactive maps, charts and motion graphics supporting stories on demographics, voting patterns, redistricting and election results. She helped her team at *The New York Times* create a gerrymandering game. Lu has been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and recognized by the Malofiej Awards for info graphics, the Society of News Design and The American Astronomical Society. Previously she was a graphics reporter at *The Washington Post*.
- Tailyr Irvine A Salish and Kootenai photojournalist born and raised on the Flathead Indian Reservation in western Montana, Irvine’s work covers the lives and complex issues facing Native American communities. She is a 2019 National Geographic Explorer and a We, Women Artist. Irvine is co-founder of Indigenous Photograph, a global database that supports the media industry in hiring Indigenous photographers to tell the stories of Native American communities at large. She began her career as a photojournalist in newsrooms across the country.

Transcript of Event

Date: September 21, 2022

Place: Gore Recital Hall  
Newark, DE

[Musical interlude to 0:00:41.1]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

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

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Good evening, everyone. It's great to welcome you to our Twelfth Annual National Agenda Speaker Series – hard to believe we've been doing this for 12 years now, asking interesting folks to come and talk to us about political and cultural issues that are on the National Agenda. We're happy to be here at the Gore Recital Hall at the University of Delaware. And I am pleased to welcome our virtual audience, those who are live streaming and those at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute; one of the earliest and the largest lifelong learning programs in the country for adults 50 and over. Welcome to you as well. We're here thanks to UD's Center for Political Communication, the CPC, with generous support from the College of Arts and Sciences. This year's theme is "Politics by the Numbers." As usual, we'll be inviting audience participation but I always like to remind folks that we want to keep conversations civil and courteous. That's kind of vital to the success of National Agenda. So, let's agree to be candid but all, also courteous of other's views. I'll open it up for Q&A around 8:30 and a couple of my students will help you ask questions with the microphone. And we'll field questions both in-house and from the Osher students tonight. And by the way, all of our previous programming is available to view at our website at [cpc.udel.edu](http://cpc.udel.edu). Tonight, in the 24-hour news cycle visual story telling shines a light on complex trends and events shaping politics and society. These images and stories may even spark deeper conversations and



empathy through artwork and photography. Our first speaker is a graphics editor at *The New York Times*. Her interactive maps, charts and motion graphics unpack complicated concepts while being delightful and engaging at the same time. She's worked on stories about demographics, voting patterns, redistricting and election results. Some of her popular pieces have also explored topics off the beaten path such as solar eclipse paths, subway chimes around the world and the origins of Chinese street signs in Manhattan. She's been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and holds a journalism degree from Northwestern University.

Please give a big Blue Hen welcome to Denise Lu.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DENISE LU: Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you for being here. Please have a seat. We have two speakers tonight. How lucky are we? Our second speaker is a Salish and Kootenai journalist born and raised on the Flathead Indian Reservation in western Montana. Through her photojournalism she represents the lives and complex issues within the diverse Native American communities. She's a 2019 National Geographic Explorer and a We, Women Artist currently working on a project that explores the complexity of blood quantum and Native identity. She's also co-founder of Indigenous Photograph, a global database that supports the media industry in hiring more Indigenous photographers to tell the stories of their communities. She also holds a journalism degree with an emphasis in Native American Studies from the University of Montana. Please welcome, Tailyr Irvine.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

TAILYR IRVINE: Hi.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you so much for being here. So, since we're talking

about art and design tonight it seems most appropriate for you to walk us through some of your work. Both of you have put together some presentations. Denise, let's start with you. I'll pull up a, your slide show if you'd like to go ahead and take this clicker and tell us what does it look like to be a graphics editor at *The New York Times* –

DENISE LU: [Chuckle].

DR. HOFFMAN: – of all places?

DENISE LU: So, hi everyone. Thanks for coming. I'm just going to quickly go through what my job is and some of my work, and what the job sort of looks like. So, I am a graphics journalist at *The New York Times* but I think for most people who are not familiar with that kind of work they're not really sure what that means. And for me, that is like a little bit of an everything [chuckle]. It's like some days I'm doing reporting, some days I'm coding up charts, some days I am, you know, crunching data. It all depends on what needs to be done for the story. But, at the end of the day the job is more or less to make visuals like charts and maps, and make sure that they tell a story to the audience because I am a journalist and that is the point of what we're trying to do with these visuals. So, we also make stuff for print which is really interesting for me because, you know, I, most of the time I'm doing stuff for web digitally and, you know, we have to make things fit on small phones and like big desk top screens but it's also really fun sometimes to blow things out into like a double spread in the print paper where people can really like, you know, pull it up to their face and like really look at the data up close. So, this is some examples of stuff that we've done for print. So, the gist of the job is we're taking things that look like data –

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

DENISE LU:                   – that sort of looks like this and this is preliminary data [chuckle] that looks like it is a spreadsheet. And, actually getting it to this stage is actually a big part of the job sometimes, whether we have to gather the data ourselves or we have to crunch it so it's clean or we have to vet it to make sure it's accurate. But getting it to this stage and taking it from something that looks like this to something that looks like this. And this is a graphic that was really powered by the other spreadsheet you just saw. So this is something that I did after the 2020 election. We looked at how counties that voted for Trump in 2016 how they did in 2020. And we found that they actually swung even further to the right for Trump in 2020 even though Biden won the Presidency. So, most of the time it's pretty straightforward. This is like a simple chart I think most people are familiar with. It's a scatter plot. And this is something that we did after the election. Its showing, I believe these are precincts in the Miami-Dade County in Florida. And, but this is like election night right after the results came in we did some analysis and found that Cuban majority precincts, I believe, in that area swung, or voted really heavily for Trump. And that's; this is like a sort of a straight analysis that we've done just right after breaking news. But sometimes it's a deeper look at, you know, this is something that we did after the Iowa caucuses where it's a deeper dive into the story. We couldn't do it like right after the results but this year, or 2020, was the first year that the Iowa caucuses they released the details of their results to the public which is not something that they'd done in the past before. And so, it was the first time that we could actually really look at the detailed data and look at how the numbers stack up during the process. And we actually found that there were a lot of flaws during the process but because this data usually is not released to the public we just like didn't know

about it until 2020. So we did a deeper dive into that and found some discrepancies in, during the process there. Sometimes I try to do things that's like a little quirkier I guess –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

DENISE LU: So this is taking a topic that I feel like is pretty mundane. It's the redistricting process that happens every ten years after the census and after this year, in 2020 after the, after the census some states lost seats and some states gained seats and that just happens because of population change which on the face seems like a pretty boring subject I think to most people. But, you know, I just try to think of like how can we make this interesting and engaging for readers. And, you know, for New York, New York actually lost a Congressional seat this year just because of the loss in population but the marginal change was really small. And so we tried to see well what are other times in history when this kind of thing happened. And this is a, an interactive story that I did for the *Times* this year we published but we had been working on it for a while. And this is also based on redistricting. So again, the idea of making something that I think most people either take for granted or don't know about or just you know don't really understand like redistricting and making it sort of engaging and interactive so that they can really learn about the concept. So we made this sort of puzzle that they have to solve where we ask them to put them in the shoes of a politician who is trying to redistrict this fake state that we created with fake political parties. And, you know, we got such a great response from social media for this from people saying, like, wow, I can't believe how easy it is to disenfranchise voters, which that was the takeaway, right? We wanted people to know that this is; politicians are kind of doing this on a day to day basis

especially now in 2022 all lot of states just redistricted. And, a lot of those districts tend to be gerrymandered but people don't even know that this is happening. So it was really, it was really cool for us to get the feedback from readers saying that it was a really enlightening exercise for them to go through this and learn about the rules of redistricting and, and how it actually impacts the voters in those places. Oh, here's the little like animated part [chuckle]. Okay. This is something I did a few years ago. This was looking at the U.S. - Mexico border back when Trump was President. Just putting some context into some of the statements that he was making about how, how, like, how many miles of the wall was built and, like, when and how it actually stacks up against the rest of the border and just how kind of a big task it was to actually do that. So this was sort of a, something putting that into context. In 2018 I worked on a bunch of stories about women candidates who were running for Congress because 2018 was known to be the Year of the Woman where a lot of women candidates ran for Congress. And so, this is a map based graphic that I did showing all of the women who won their elections in 2018 and where they are in the country and how it stacks up against the men in their states. And we also looked at state legislatures that year as well and just historically over time. So, again, this is like a map based sort of graphic where the southern states are on the bottom and we compared the shares of, the share that each state legislature had of women and how that compares to the U.S. average. And by putting some, this kind of like convoluted data into a visual graphic you can see already there's a trend of southern states historically tend to have a lower share of women in their state legislatures than the U.S. average. We also looked at racial demographics as well in 2018, I believe this was, where we looked at the demographics of

candidates for Congress and we found that there was a, a political tilt to just the different demographics in that year. On to more demographics; this is something I did I think last year looking at the Asian population in America. And just, you know, looking at how there are many different types of people of Asian descent in America and they all live in different places and just the economic and, economic, income and also voting patterns and how they differ across these different groups. And, the 2020 Census sort of along that vein; did some analysis after the 2020 Census and we found that this is graphics showing how a lot of metro cities went from in 2010 a majority white metro area to now a majority non-white metro area. And, a lot of the stories that I do are not politics, are not demographics based at all. But, you know, these are some stories that I'm really passionate about. So this is a story that I did earlier this year about Chinese street signs in Manhattan's Chinatown and we did this whole kind of like historical look at how they came to be and walked around all the streets and like built our own database for this and we found that actually in 2021 there's fewer bilingual street signs than there used to be in the '80's. This is another kind of quirky thing that I did looking at subway trains around the world and just some visuals on breaking down sort of like –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle]

DENISE LU: – music theory a little bit of subway chimes around the world. This got some interesting feedback from readers [chuckle]. And, last but not least, this graphic I did when I was at *The Washington Post*. It was in 2017 when the “Great American Solar Eclipse” happened and this was just a story that I did that was so, like, out of the ordinary of anything I would normally do but it was analyzing like thousands of years of eclipse paths and just looking at it



and, and bringing it down from a photographic point of view. And, yeah, that is sort of just a little bit of what I do at the *Times*.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

DENISE LU: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: And that last graphic was an award winner at –

DENISE LU: It's won; it won weirdly a science award –

DR. HOFFMAN: A science award.

DENISE LU: – which I, it was like the American Astronomical Society or something which I was like very flattered by because that's – when scientists are recognizing your work it's like you know something.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

DENISE LU: You did something right, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right, well thank you, Denise. We'll have a conversation in a little bit. But let's hand things over to Tailyr. You also have a journalism background. Tell us about you, how you translate issues, cultural and political issues into your photojournalism.

TAILYR IRVINE: All right.

DR. HOFFMAN: And I'll hand you the proverbial clicker here. Thank you.

TAILYR IRVINE: Yep. Okay. Yeah, so I'm going to be talking about visual media and Indigenous communities and kind of why I do what I do and kind of the importance to me. So, a little bit about me. I'm a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Born and raised on the Flathead Reservation in Montana. Is there a laser? No. But, [laughter], so there's the reservation, just so you guys can have a reference. Montana is in the corner and

my reservation is right in northwest Montana. I'm a documentary photographer. I work with stories with *National Geographic*, *The New York Times* and *Smithsonian* and other publications around the country. So I kind of want you guys to like close your eyes – or you don't have to close your eyes – but have like a thought in your head and picture a Native American in your head. And just kind of go with that and think about what you think about, what they look like, the hairstyle, the clothing style. Just kind of get something in your head. So the odds are it's probably something like this. This screenshot was taken on Sunday [indiscernible] a Native American, right? And this is why I got into journalism specifically it's because when I went to college, when I left the reservation when I was a kid, at 18, no one knew what a Native American – what my life was about. No one had any idea. It was a majority white school that I went to and my dorm floor was almost completely white and they had no idea. They're so full of ignorance because no one taught them things. No one taught them anything about Natives. This is what they knew and even now when you Google Native Americans this is what comes up. There is one contemporary photo; I think there's even a teepee in the background of that one. So, [chuckle] like, you know, it's, it's really important to me that we have accurate representation of what contemporary Native life looks like. And, we have a long way to go still. This is the top results and I'm working really hard to kind of change this narrative and change the stereotypes of what people think of when they think of Native America. That's my goal. [Chuckle.] So for me this is what Native America looks like. That's my dad [chuckle] laughing; that's my nephew, my nephew and my niece in the background. This is just like a Bitterroot day. This is what we do annually. We pick some root and we have like a big dinner afterwards. But the

root is called Bitterroot or speculum (sic) in my language. But it's bitter, right? [Chuckle.] So like my nephew is trying it for the first time and my dad thinks it's hilarious.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TAILYR IRVINE: And this is a photo from Standing Rock. I think; if you guys know a lot about Standing Rock it was one of the pipeline to protest, or one of the protests of the Dakota Access Pipeline in South Dakota. And it was the largest gathering of Natives since Wounded Knee and the media portrayed it a lot as kind of this battle in the west which between like cops and like people on horseback and water cannons. And, you know, it kind of looked like a very violent affair to me. But I went up there three times that year in September, November and December for a few weeks and this is what it looked like to me. You know? It's just kids living as people living. And so, I kind of want to show a different side of what people thought. Yeah. This is just a photo. A powwow photo specifically. Just people being people. Kids being kids, you know? And this is what Native America looks like if you were from there and you live it. This is my nephew again [chuckle] and my other nephew. I photograph my family a lot. But this is for a story with *The New York Times* on reopening in America. So, what it looks like in different parts of the country. And for me it's really important that I tell stories about Natives constantly. My goal is to show, you know, a window into Native life. And so a lot of my focus are (sic) Indigenous pointed but it's equally as important to me that Natives are included in all kinds of coverage, not just Native stories, not just stories about reservations and all these issues, but like everyday stories. So when *The New York Times* does a piece about reopening I worked really hard to include Native representation so you can

see Natives outside the context of being Native. I think that's when you get true accurate representation is when it's in, across the board, not just in Native pointed stories. This was for *The New York Times* again on a Thanksgiving story, right? So people think about Thanksgiving and they think about pilgrims and Natives but what does it look like for a Native family like mine. And for me it looks like [chuckle] hunting with my dad and my brother and my nephew. And so we spent the day hunting. We didn't get anything. And this is what I got, you know? Just my dad, my brother and my nephew. It's important to note that since this is about politics, being Native is not only race but it's a legal status which means everything about Natives, every story you see about Natives is based in politics. You can't do a story about Native Americans and not have politics involved because our identity is policed by the government [chuckle] and nothing's more political than that. And historically we've only had outsiders for a long time showing what Native America looks like and the consequences of that you see all the time. You see it in that Google search. It's, it's what happens when people only show your community in one light. Ideally, all stories, all communities should be told from outsiders and insider's perspective. They should have a balance. But for Native communities it's been majority told by white males and the results of that are huge consequences. We're shown as people of the past, stoic, ah, romanticized and there are real consequences to that. We're shown as a vanishing race and when you are not shown in the media, if you're not shown accurately, if you're not shown contemporarily, then you don't exist, right, because this is documenting our history. This is what life looks like right now. Every newspaper in this country, their job is to document what history looks like today. And so, if we're not included in that coverage then

we don't exist in history. And if you don't exist, if you don't, if you're not present then you can disappear, right, without people noticing. And that's what's happened. So we've had a big crisis called the missing and murdered Indigenous woman crisis. Indigenous women go missing and are murdered at rates higher than any other ethnicity in this country. A lot of that's due to jurisdictional zoning; who can be prosecuted on a reservation, who can't be prosecuted on the reservation, you know, if it's a Native, a Native crime, if it's a non-Native, un-Native crime – like all of that matters. If the FBI has coverage, or if the state has coverage or if the tribe has coverage and there are a lot of cracks that people slip through and so women go missing and are murdered. And so I just photographed, you know, this is – sorry, I'm going to go back for a second – a woman whose sister is missing. She got a tip that she heard a rumor that her sister was shoved into like a cave. So, they're searching this under, like this river full of caves and they found some bones but it turned out to be animal bones. This is a daughter, a teenager at her mother's grave. Her mother was found missing in a hotel room, or found murdered in a hotel room – I'm sorry, I'm sorry – and she was wrapped in a carpet and set on fire. And it wasn't, it was deemed accidental and so this is a story following up on that and having that case reopened again. Native Americans die at higher rates from the police as well. And so this is a story about mothers who lost their sons in BIA jails. And then this is my big project that I, I'm focusing now with National, with funding from *National Geographic* on navigating love in Native America. I told you guys that our DNA is policed. When we're born we have a fraction and you have to be a certain fraction to be enrolled in your tribe. And so this story focuses on like what makes you Native and who says is it a fraction? Like, if you live, if you live on a

reservation are you more Native; are you less Native if you're adopted by a white family? Like if you speak the language does that make you more Native than someone who doesn't? What if you're full blood and you don't like practice your culture? Like, what makes you Native? Who's the gatekeeper of all of this? And my story kind of explores the complexities of that. So you see a little prairie. You can see her blood quantum on the bottom is one forty-fifth two hundred and fifty-sixths. So, that's the fraction of Native she is. And this is important because most tribes have a minimal number that you have to be and you have to date within that tribe to have your kid enrolled. So, you know, she, before we even have a body we have a fraction attached to us. This is Zach (sic); you can see his blood quantum too. And it affects who we date, right? So he only dates people from his reservation because he needs that blood to be, to have his children enrolled. This is Marley (sic); he's only a quarter and he's also gay but it still affects the way he dates. These are my siblings [chuckle]; I focus a lot on my family. They're both pregnant. My brother, he's dating someone who's Navajo. And my sister dates someone who's part of our tribe too. And so just kind of exploring the differences between what that means for the child and what that means for the one who's enrolled and is not enrolled. So, she's enrolled. This is Prairie. This is Najoni (sic). She's not enrolled; she's one thirty-second short of being enrolled in our tribe. My brother is seven-sixteenths. He's half Salish Kootnai; our mother is a different tribe so her blood doesn't count. But this affects the kid, right? So my brother; we all hunt. You've seen the photos earlier. Because Najoni is not part of our tribe, like legally she will never be able to hunt on our land with us, ever. Leah (sic) didn't grow up on her reservation and so because of that she; it was really important that her daughter grows up on

the reservation that she's from. Even though she's not enrolled there she's still a part of the tribe. She's not legally a part of the tribe and so everything she does is outside because she wants to show her, her home, her culture. Like, you can't participate in any of that stuff if you're not enrolled. And that's kind of what [chuckle] I'm working on. But I'm also a co-founder of Indigenous Photograph which is a database of Indigenous photographers across the country. Actually, we're global; so across the world. Indigenous database because for a long time we heard an excuse of like editors would love to hire Native photographers, we just can't find them, they just don't exist. And so this was kind of in response to that where we have a database now of Natives around the, or Indigenous photographers around the world and kind of use it for editors so they can search. If you guys are curious, you want to find more Native photographers and see the work they do you can go to [Indigenousphotograph.com](http://Indigenousphotograph.com) or follow them at Indigenous photo and, and find out other work people are doing.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: That was fascinating to see two very different perspectives on how you can bring graphics and art and design to translate complicated ideas particularly around mathematics and statistics and demographics. So, the theme of this year's series, again, is "Politics by the Numbers." Let's start with one of those very complicated ideas that Denise mentioned which is gerrymandering. So, I wanted to start with the congressional district that I live in. So, I'm going to pull up a map – oop – I'm going to pull the map here. So this is, as of 2017 this was the 7th Congressional District in Pennsylvania. It was nicknamed Goofy Kicking Donald Duck –

DENISE LU: [Chuckle.]

TAILYR IRVINE: [Chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – because its' highly contorted shape resembled one Disney character planting a foot in the posterior of another. In 2018, Pennsylvania's highest court said the congressional boundaries didn't just look funny but they also violated the Constitution by unfairly favoring Republicans who drew them. So this district – I'll go back, actually I don't know if I can go back; yeah, I'll go back – it spreads fifty miles from the Philadelphia suburbs all the way out to Amish country near Lancaster. It's one of the most gerrymandered districts in the country – was one – and was often used to explain the country's dissent into tribal politics and voter cynicism. This is from one of your colleagues, Trip Gabriel from *The New York Times* who wrote this earlier, a few years ago. So, Denise, I wanted to ask what your thoughts were about when you took this assignment, [indiscernible] with animated version, when you took this assignment what were your thoughts when you first were given this assignment. Did you know much about gerrymandering before this or like how it worked? Or what it even meant?

DENISE LU: Yeah. So, I mean, I had a basic concept, basic idea of what this was but you know with, as with every story you have to do a lot of research because we sort of just have to read up a lot about these topics that we're just assigned and we have to know enough to be able to tell that to the reader. So, for this project the goal was to kind of teach people the process of redistricting. And, along with that, how gerrymander happens, how gerrymandering happens and, and sort of why that happens. So, we decided to create this fake place specifically with fake political parties because we wanted to



sort of separate it from a real world with real political parties where people have real stakes because we really wanted people to come into this cold with no sort of prior attachment to a red party or a blue party and just have a clean slate and, and just have the takeaway be learning and learning about the redistricting process. So, that's why we sort of went with the sort of simplified version of what [chuckle] happens in the real world. And because it was so simple we were able to sort of explain the different concepts of redistricting from having the same number of people in each district to having compact districts that are, you know, that are kind of close to each other and also fulfilling requirements like having communities of, of interest together. And so, we really wanted people to kind of learn about the process and that's also I think what makes this kind of different than like what you would see in like the game section of *The New York Times*. Its, yeah, it's like a game but we really actually didn't want to call it that. We, it's, it's kind of a puzzle that has like a lesson. It's got like a moral, right? So, we really needed to balance sort of all these tenets of redistricting that we really wanted to hammer into people's heads so that they knew about like how this process works but also making it engaging enough so that they can actually try it out for themselves and understand how easy or how difficult it can be to kind of have a fair map but also have it politically advantageous for your party. So, I think those are the two things we, we were really balancing for the story and so hopefully the product that we came out with achieved those goals. But, yeah, it was definitely something that we really had to think about. It wasn't just about making a fun game which –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

DENISE LU: – like, that was part of it but, you know, it was really about

like teaching people how, how the process works.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, what this actually is.

DENISE LU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: I'm curious, with just a show of hands in the audience, how, if anyone knows where the term gerrymandering comes from? I'm not seeing, I'm seeing a couple of hands. If we could pull up that on queue slide that is a political cartoon from back in 1812 when a man named, a politician named Elbridge Gerry – who eventually became Vice President of the United States at the time of his death – but as Governor of Massachusetts in 1812 signed a bill that created a partisan district in the Boston area that was compared to shape of a mythological salamander. So the term had negative connotations and gerrymandering, his last name was Gerry, mandering is the salamander, the term has negative connotations so almost always considered a corruption of the democratic process. So, this is a, sort of a, a negative way of thinking about redistricting not just as a function of creating like-communities but to create communities that are more likely to vote for a particular candidate. And while the Supreme Court has since ruled this to be unconstitutional on racial lines there's still some unclarity (sic) around how to do the, how to redistrict based on partisan boundaries. And as Denise said we see this every ten years or so. This is unusual that a state Supreme Court sort of came in and said this is unconstitutional but this is very much one of those things that, that affects voters across this country in all of these different districts that because it's so complicated to understand a lot of voters don't really make decisions based on that. So, so let's, let's take a, a moment to talk a little bit about, about culture, about ethnic background and about gender. So, Tailyr, Native women make up

less than one percent of the U.S. population but as you mentioned according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention they face murder rates more than ten times the national average. And murder is the third leading cause of death for Native women. Can you tell us how American news media typically have covered this tragedy and what journalists need to do or understand to properly alert the public to what's happening? What do you think has been missing from the conversation around the treatment of Native American women in this country?

TAILYR IRVINE: I think when you talk about one of these stories there's a lot of nuance to it and there is a lot of background that people don't have the knowledge of. I think the biggest question people want to know is like why? Why do they go missing? Why? What's happening? And it's really broad and you know I think it goes down to, you know, like historical racism between the police and Native Americans, it goes down to colonization, it goes down to the way jurisdictions are drawn up. Tribal police can't prosecute nonmembers on reservation land. So, what ends up happening is like a murder will happen on a reservation. It'll be under FBI jurisdiction which means you have to wait for the FBI to fly in from D.C. or from wherever they fly in from and by the time that happens evidence is lost, there is people, people forget because memories are short and by the time the investigation is actually conducted it's usually not done very well. And, [chuckle] there's usually the conclusion for a lot of Native women who die under mysterious causes is just – what do you call it – environmental causes they say. They died from exposure is a big one. But they don't ask the questions of like why –

DR. HOFFMAN: Exposure to?

TAILYR IRVINE: Exposure to the weather, exposure to anything. It's just, it's death from exposure. But they don't say, like, what, you know, a 14-year-old girl is doing out in the middle of a field at this time of day or [chuckle] like what's happening to lead up. It's just, and so as cases get closed without actually having a real live investigation. And I think the media used to focus a lot on who these women are, right? And we all know who the most vulnerable people in communities are and as people who, you know, don't have strong families who can go missing and people don't report it because they don't know exactly where they are, they don't have like a, a strict schedule of where they usually are. And so those women are the most vulnerable and people know that. And so they pick those women on purpose where people won't miss them, or won't notice right away. And what ends up happening is the family knows when someone is missing and they tell the police – like she usually checks in but she hasn't and well she's probably just drunk, she's probably out partying – and those are real things that police have said to families. And the family is like, no, it's not like her to be gone this long and by the time a body is found it's like, it's too late. Or they're never found. And I think there's so much nuance to the stories of why this happens. And the media often goes through trends, I think, especially in Native American country. They will stick on to these things. So MIW (sic) was a big trend like three or four years ago and then something shifts and it dies off. Like, you know, pipeline protests were a big trend and just it goes, and it goes. And so I think they start doing really well but they then there's not easy answers and they don't continue to follow-up, and they're like, the story's been told already. But the; like, it's still a story and people are still going missing and they don't – when you're from New York and you're doing a story in Montana and you've never

been to Montana and you've never been around Native people and you're flying in and you're just parachuting in and getting the story and leaving. Like, this is a traumatic story for these families and I think sometimes the media gets it wrong when they don't come with as much empathy as they need. They don't realize that these are people and not statistics, statistics and that's really hard. Like you see these numbers that you read off. They're scary [nervous chuckle]. The third leading cause of death is murder. Like, I'm a Native American woman; I travel a lot by myself constantly and that's just something I think all the time. And I think often time the media gets really into numbers and statistics but forgets that they're actually people and the families are mourning and people are still searching and missing and crying. And that's why visually it's really important to spend time and like embed and so you can get past the, the easy photos and get to the family and show what it looks like for a family who has had a, a daughter or a sister or a mom missing for sometimes decades but often like years and years.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum. You talked in class earlier today about sort of the stereotype of the four D's of media coverage of Native Americans. I wonder if you could talk about that a little bit.

TAILYR IRVINE: Yeah. So, historically Natives will have been shown in media for, what we call the four D's which is dancing, drumming, drinking or death and that's the only time you see Natives. And if you look back through the archives of like the '90's or the early 2000's, like, it falls under those categories every time. It's always in regalia. It's always with feathers. It's always some romanticized version or a caricature of not like a real human. And so, what happens is people don't think we exist so we can go missing because [nervous chuckle] who cares, right? And, I think it's really important that when we're

covering these Native communities we have to keep in mind, like, historically the relationship with the media has been traumatic and people don't want to talk to you because the media has gotten it wrong for a lot of years and they've done serious harm to these communities and to come in and think that you can change it and that people are going to be so open and responsive because your story is different is really [nervous chuckle] ignorant. And I think it's really important to remember that you could go in with this context and this background and understand why people don't want to talk to you and, and push to get the better story and, and do justice to communities that have been harmed.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, building on that, I'll ask you this first, Tailyr, and then I'll ask the same question of, of Denise. How do you think your work has changed the communities that you have photographed? Have you noticed a difference in how they're treated? In other words, have you seen evidence that bringing attention to these communities causes real change in perceptions?

TAILYR IRVINE: I think, I mean it's not quite as like black and white. It's like [indiscernible] and now people are nicer to [chuckle] like. I wish it was like that but I think educating people is really what I'm doing with my story telling. I want people to not be, you know, like, maybe when someone who's going off to college who's 18 and they face like a little less ignorance than I faced. And that's really what my goal is, is to just have like an example of Natives in the media that fall out of the stereotypes. And, I don't know how far reaching that is. I know people now know about blood quantum and people who have never heard of it before tell me that like they had no idea and that doing the research and I think for me that's what matters is that people are seeing Natives in a contemporary light. I don't know how far reaching that it but if it helps, you know, a couple of

people learn more things that they didn't know before then, then I'm happy [chuckle].

DR. HOFFMAN: And yeah, Denise, have you heard feedback about how, how something you created maybe impacted a community or a group in a certain way that, that maybe they wouldn't have otherwise so they hadn't encountered this piece of graphic design or art?

DENISE LU: I think the most kind of ,like, recent example of that which is actually a very, it was a very like direct sort of impact that I had [chuckle] which is usually it doesn't happen but the story that I did with another reporter on street signs in Chinatown in Manhattan, that was something that we like just pitched ourselves and it wasn't something – you know, most of the stories that I do are like off breaking news or it's like if it's on the homepage then it's easy to pitch to, right? So, but this was like never going to be on the homepage unless I did it. And so, that was something that we did and I was super proud of that because after that we got a lot of – and that's something that, you know, we reached out to the Chinatown community. The reporter I worked with, he like had so many interviews with people from the community and also from people who used to live in the community in the '80's and we got a lot of great feedback from Chinatown and actually one of the city council members, it caught his eye and they [chuckle] actually reinstalled a bilingual street sign that was previously taken, taken down. So that was like a very rare example of a super direct impact that –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

DENISE LU: – that story had. Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Very cool. Well, so, as you know our students in the National Agenda class had questions and one of the questions that Kelly had for

both of you is how do you feel that your unique ethnic backgrounds have influenced your work and experiences through your careers? Have you found that there have been challenges based on your backgrounds or have, in some cases; they maybe have been an advantage?

TAILYR IRVINE: Do you – I think for me my background has led me to my career. It's the reason I want to do this. It makes me want to push harder so people behind me don't face the same things that I have faced. And I think they don't tell you like [chuckle] when you leave the reservation that you're going to constantly be like the only Native in a room and it, it's been true. Like, I don't know, I think there's one other Native in this [chuckle] room but like it's, it's, its constantly true. Like in every newsroom I'm in I'm the only Native and the pressure that puts on to either dispel like ignorance and stereotypes are like staying silent. It's a lot and you know especially being an intern in bigger newsrooms when you know you have people higher up saying things that are like hurtful and racist. It's hard; it's really hard to be the person to say something especially if you're so young and you're not that experienced. And for a long time I didn't have the words to articulate how to correct them in ways that they could understand and how to put my thoughts and my anger into like [chuckle] coherent sentences. And I think that's made it really challenging to be in this industry is how lonely it is when you're the only person in this, in a room or in a place and that's partly why I co-founded Indigenous Photograph is because I felt a lot of pressure to cover these stories and I felt [chuckle] like I'm just one person and like I have opinions and thoughts but I'm just one Native and other Natives have opinions and different thoughts. And, they would do it differently than I would do it but I felt all this pressure of people talking to me and interviewing me



about it. And, then we co-founded this [chuckle] group and it's been incredible. And now when I don't want to do something I don't feel like I'm disappointing [chuckle] like the only Native, like, the only viewpoint. I can point to someone else and be like they're doing great work, they're doing great work and I think the point is that you can look at all of our work and see who's doing well. See like an accurate full picture, full representation instead of just having one photographer try to do it all, you have a bunch of them doing a bunch of stories. Like I [indiscernible] MIW story but a lot of photographers do and it's across culture and across communities and seeing that lets you see like a complete picture of the issue and I think that's, that's my advantage.

DR. HOFFMAN: Denise?

DENISE LU: Yeah, I mean, I feel like Tailyr probably [chuckle] has a more of a, a, a, like a, I mean, if you're, you're focusing on sort of like your own community. I, I feel like I don't get to do that a lot with my work specifically. But, like I do think that, you know, often times like I am, for me, this like this specific sort of field that I'm in can like and I'm sometimes dealing with like code and like that kind of thing and sometimes I'm like the only woman who is sort of like talking to a lot of men about like code and that can be kind of like weird sometimes. And I've definitely had times where I've been talked down to and that's not very [chuckle] awesome. But you know also like I feel like I bring to the table – like I've definitely called out editors on like how they've framed certain stories and how, you know, they shouldn't be saying certain things or like framing a story this way or why don't you go interview somebody else who actually can probably give you a better answer on something. So, there's definitely more stories that I want to work on that are like what I feel like are important but I feel

like already I've done things that would not have made it to *The Times* if I were not the person who would have brought it there. So, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Great. Thank you. I have so many things I want to talk to you guys about so I'm; I'm going to skip to new visual media. One of our students, Steven (sic) and myself are interested in how have new media like Tik Tok changed or impacted your work in any way? We talked a little bit about this in the classroom today and Tailyr specifically I know you post a lot on Instagram. How essential are these platforms to journalists and artists?

TAILYR IRVINE: For me, I think, I, I post less and less now but [chuckle] I think it's crucial. I think seeing, like having a place where you can see this kind of media without having, you know, like a \$400 subscription to a newspaper or a magazine. Like it's, it's free and you can explore and find it that way. And I think especially on Tik Tok, there's like Native Tik Tok [chuckle] which is a really cool.

DR. HOFFMAN: I've actually found myself on Native Tik Tok –

TAILYR IRVINE: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: I don't know how I got on that algorithm –

TAILYR IRVINE: See, that would never happen ten years ago right? And now you're –

DR. HOFFMAN: Right.

TAILYR IRVINE: – you're learning things about the culture that you wouldn't know and it's from real kids living a life and they're doing like their version of dispelling stereotypes or explaining their culture or explaining things that you're doing like what I'm doing but on a Tik Tok platform. And, it's, it's really cool and I think, like, using social media with journalism and mixing that together especially visually is it, it can be really powerful. It can be a way to expand your reach and

reach audiences that you could never reach before. Like now you guys can all follow me on Instagram –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle]

TAILYR IRVINE: – and you would have a window into something that you don't know before and I think that's really cool and –

DR. HOFFMAN: Subtle plug. [Laughter.]

TAILYR IRVINE: Yeah. Subtle plug. Follow me on –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TAILYR IRVINE: – Instagram everybody. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle]

TAILYR IRVINE: Yeah. It's a way.

DENISE LU: Yeah. I think that for me I feel like Twitter specifically is such a like journalist platform but I, I will say while it can get kind of like crazy on Twitter it actually has helped me tremendously with even my career. Like, especially with database field, everyone is kind of like participates a lot on Twitter and it kind of like, like lowers or decreases the barriers to entry a little bit when you can like, you know, you're tweeting at like somebody who, people tweeted me all the time.

DR. HOFFMAN: They don't know where it comes from? It's just another image and –

DENISE LU: [Chuckle]

DR. HOFFMAN: – and Twitter tells you like are you sure you want to repost this before reading it?

DENISE LU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: But like how many people –

DENISE LU: It does that sometimes when I want to [indiscernible]  
[laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

DENISE LU: No, but like I, there is the bad side of Twitter. But I will say, like, especially when I was like starting out, like, it was really easy for me to tweet at people who were doing, you know, kind of my, kind of my, my kind of work on different platforms and like, I mean at different news outlets, and, you know, I feel like especially people in my field they really love Twitter but, and, and they –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Chuckle]

DENISE LU: – they're really, at least the people I've encountered they really like sort of reaching out and helping students. Or, you know, whoever need like whoever is trying to start out in the field and like especially people in my field, I feel like a lot of people kind of learn this stuff on their own so they're often like, well how do I code this, or how do I analyze this data. So I feel like that sort of changed the field for this industry a little bit.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

DENISE LU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Cool, very cool. I, I like how it, it seems like journalists and artists are finding ways to utilize it and for good and –

DENISE LU: [Chuckle]

DR. HOFFMAN: – and find ways to, to not let it, to let your, to let your work shine through and to demonstrate how like that's something you were saying earlier, Denise, how you provide the sources, you provide the methodology so that hopefully students and anyone who's viewing these things online who sees a graph or an image should be like, wait a minute, where did that come from? And

when you have it coming from a source like *The New York Times* and you have methods that demonstrate that it's, you know, soundly done, I think it's something that all of us probably need a little more training in, in, in sort of news media literacy but also data visualization literacy.

DENISE LU: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, I think it's really important the work that you're doing. I want to shift to political polarization because last week as, as Kelly mentioned in our questions this week, last week we got to talk to Pearce Godwin. He's the founder and CEO of the Listen First Project and he talked about, we heard his ideas on how listening to people and understanding that we're all just human beings can help bridge some of the gaps caused by this vast political polarization, and racial ethnic polarization, and generational polarization that we're experiencing in American society. Do you find that, Tailyr, specifically, do you find that your photographs in the sense that they capture real people and real emotions helped bridge these gaps by allowing people to recognize the human beings behind these kind of polarizing issues?

TAILYR IRVINE: I hope so [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle]

TAILYR IRVINE: That's kind of the goal. I think with my photography I want to create, you know, a window into life; what I think that's what photography is in general. Like, you can take a photo in your home and post it on Instagram and we can see something about you that we would never have seen before. And like, oh hey, I have that, that plant or I have those shoes.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Chuckle]

TAILYR IRVINE: Like, you know, you connect in some ways and I think

photography is really good at connecting people and showing them another life that could very well be theirs. And I think it's really cool that you don't need to have the same language or even the same level of education. It could be anybody and you can understand and look at a photo and read it and feel the emotion and hopefully have empathy with the subjects in the photo or relate to them. And that's kind of why I wanted to do photography is because it's so cross-cultural; or because you can look at someone and be like, oh hey, you know, I hunt too. That could be my family [indiscernible] [chuckle] like, you know, or oh hey, like you know I've, like the funeral photo. Like I, people have been to funerals, they can relate to that and they can see like the grief and relate to grief and I think when you are able to connect with people like that just or even if you have photos paired with a powerful story then I think it really pushes to change, change people and change hopefully what you want [chuckle].

DR. HOFFMAN: Well I think something that came up earlier today too is that unlike with data visualizations and graphs and charts which do require a little bit of like okay let's pay attention to what this means –

DENISE LU: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: – what's the X axis, what's the Y axis? Photographs can speak without really any – like we understand human emotion. We get that, right? So, I think it's, I think you guys should pair up and like –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

DENISE LU: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – do like a data viz, you know, photograph, photography like exhibit. I think that would be really cool to see –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

DENISE LU: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – [indiscernible] different side by side. Right?

TAILYR IRVINE: That would be so cool.

DR. HOFFMAN: Or, to have you guys both take a story and interpret it –

TAILYR IRVINE: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – through your different lenses of –

DENISE LU: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – of your artistic backgrounds. Well, so I am going to open it up in a few minutes for questions so for those in, at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, if you want to submit some questions through the Zoom that you're on we'll be opening that up soon. And then for those of us in the audience here we'll have two students – I'll call them up in a, a few minutes – who will be in charge of the microphones on either side of the stage. And if you just raise your hand they'll, they'll come to you. But let me stay on this polarization issue for a moment. For both of you, and maybe I'll start with, with Denise, how do you think, this comes from Gabriella, how do you think that photojournalism, visual journalism data viz and the work that you both do can, can help bridge such stark divides. We talked a little bit about it in terms of photography but can you share an experience where you saw your work may be able to bring people who might have been on very different sides of an issue who – we talked a little bit earlier about people who will call you out and say fake news, or you know, I don't believe what you're saying. Have you ever seen your work or a story that you've worked on bring people to like, oh, I guess we do, when we look at that we see the same thing?

DENISE LU: I feel like –

DR. HOFFMAN: Please tell me you have a story like that.

DENISE LU: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

DENISE LU: Well, okay, here's what I'll say is like I feel like what the type of work I do which is like sort of data viz, you know, it's very different than like I would say like a regular 500 word or a 1,000 word, word story because I think like what we tend to do is we really, okay, we'll take that story and we'll think well, let's actually analyze the data behind what some statements are. I mean, you know, I work with reporters all the time but like I'm talking about even like big national stories. We'll, we'll say okay, here's like what the headline is let's see what the data is behind that. And so like I think with us it's like we're trying to; I feel like sometimes a lot of people will poke holes and be like well that statement is not true. And we'll be like well, actually like if you look at the data and we break it down for you this way and we show it to you this way it's like it can be hard to refute when you're you know staring down a wall of like hard data that is – which is not to say data can't be biased; data can definitely be biased – but you know as long as we have, we do the best we can to vet the sources and vet the date itself. So, when you break it down –

DR. HOFFMAN: When you add to existing stories –

DENISE LU: – [indiscernible] –

DR. HOFFMAN: – that people might as, as a –

DENISE LU: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – knee jerk –

DENISE LU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – reaction say I don't believe that –



DENISE LU: Exactly.

DR. HOFFMAN: – that’s not true. And then you can provide like well, actually we’ve looked at this and –

DENISE LU: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: – there are ways to demonstrate that this, this is true.

DENISE LU: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: That’s great. Okay, so I think I’m going to bring up one more photo and I, I realized you had this in your, your slide show but this ultrasound photo which was in, appeared in the magazine of Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian. This is a Native, Native parents Michael Irvine and Leah Nelson hold a sonogram of their unborn baby. And, the, the caption on this said that Native parents such as Michael and Leah know the blood quantum regulations affects their children in myriad ways throughout their lives. As you mentioned, through where you live, how you get healthcare and you were on a, this is where I, I do my, like, I, I feel like I’m this is your life –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: You were on a podcast in 2021 –

TAILYR IRVINE: Oh, God.

DR. HOFFMAN: – on Montana Public Radio –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – on a new angle where you said, you’re quoted as saying “historically Native communities have been represented by stereotypical photos in regalia, always in poverty porn. You know all those things and I work really hard to make my images not about that. When I have a moment to say, to show where someone’s just human that’s what I look for the most.” I was really

compelled by this term poverty, poverty porn and if you could kind of explain what that's like. What that means to you in the Indigenous community and then do you see that in other communities as well?

TAILYR IRVINE: Yeah. I mean, it's not new. Its, it's been any people in poverty, like, you go there and you get like you know the, the reaching hand for food or like, you know, it's very gross and very flat and doesn't advance the story. It doesn't move anything. It just says like this thing people are addicted to. Like they want to see people in poverty look like they're in poverty, right? Like, you see it in pictures; if someone posts a photo of someone who, you know, gets government assistance but they have like an iPhone then that's like [chuckle] you know, all hell breaks loose. It's not like a new thing. It's like you; people want to see people in poverty in poverty. They don't, they have this idea in their head and these photos help that, you know? They help; you see it with like drug addicts too. Like all of these like really sensationalized photos of what poor looks like and what drug abuse looks like and –

DR. HOFFMAN: So, so you think photo journalists are sort of pushed into reinforcing these stereotypes?

TAILYR IRVINE: I think bad photojournalists are. [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TAILYR IRVINE: I think when you just go into a community and you try to get the, whatever photo you have in your mind that makes up poverty or makes up whatever, then it's really gross. And in Native communities that's been the case, like, you know, people want to go to your reservation and they either want to see like this romanticized Tonto Native version of someone or they want to see like the poverty and someone being so resilient and like you know, like one hero

who is like fixing the entire reservation by going to college. Like that's not [chuckle] like an accurate story, right? Like, it's, it's constant and so, for me I'm so tired of seeing that. And you see it; like you could just Google Native American and like look at the archives of like every paper in this country and you'll see the photos and you'll see it's, it's, it's really gross. And so I try really hard to push past that and I just don't think like showing someone who's poor and like showing them in like squalor and then making them look like they're poor advances any story or helps the person or helps, helps anything really besides the photographer feeling like oh man I'm so good and I, I got this shot –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TAILYR IRVINE: – and it's like it's, it's bad. It's bad journalism, it's bad photography and it's just bad people [chuckle].

DR. HOFFMAN: And, you know, from a, a viewers perspective it's not as interesting. Like, I want to see different perspectives. I want to see, you know, I, I didn't realize that photo of that, that child kind of coming down the hill on like a skateboard or something –

TAILYR IRVINE: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – was from Standing Rock. I didn't realize that's where that picture was from, and like oh, wow. You know, like, that doesn't look like the protest photos that I saw in, in, in 2016. So, from my perspective it's more interesting. So I appreciate it. So, I'm going to ask Millie and Kate to go ahead and come to these microphones as I ask one final question. And this is like I hate asking questions like this but it's, it's, I thought it would be a good transition. If you had, both of you, if you had one of those proverbial magic wands – oh, what a stupid question, right? But if you did –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – have a magic wand what like one change would you like to see in the American news industry? Is there a community that deserves more attention, is there a different way, way of framing stories about different communities or about politics? Is there a need for more, more art, more graphic design? What was one thing you'd be like that would be really cool if, if American journalism would, would change in this way.

TAILYR IRVINE: Ah –

DENISE LU: I can go first.

TAILYR IRVINE: You go first.

DENISE LU: I, I feel like for me I would really love to see more kind of, well, okay, I guess there's a couple of things. I would love to more women of color in power at big media outlets because that's not the case right now and those people are the ones who dictate what stories are assigned, what stories to focus on and what is like going on, on the homepage, and like what people get to read. I mean, that change is slowly happening but it's very slow and you know like sometimes the stories that you want to do get turned down because someone at the top doesn't see the value in what you want to do. So, I would love to see that. And I guess the other thing just really quick is more local journalism which I know is you know fading right now so and, and I know it's super important.

DR. HOFFMAN: Tailyr?

TAILYR IRVINE: I, I feel both of those things it's really crucial. For me I think every major newsroom across the country needs to have a tribal affairs desk. I think it's atrocious that the; at *The New York Times*, at *The Washington*

Post that, that no of them have a tribal affairs desk especially in this country when like all the, all the sovereignty is really being tested and pushed. The fact that there is not a team dedicated to understand Indian law and to understand what that means for sovereignty and what it means when different things happen like the Indian Child Welfare Act is always on the chopping block and what it means and have someone dedicated to research on these things and understand the historical context and –

DR. HOFFMAN: Which Act?

TAILYR IRVINE: – which I think –

DR. HOFFMAN: I, I'm sorry can you explain what that was that's always on the chopping block you said?

TAILYR IRVINE: The Indian Child Welfare Act. So it's like in [nervous chuckle] I think like 60's, 70's, 80's like or since it began. Native children were stolen and forced to assimilate. So they stole Native kids, gave them to like white families and have them like assimilated or they [chuckle] would steal them and give them to the church and it's atrocious. But there's a; they named the Child Welfare Act make sure that Native parents get, or Native individuals get, makes it like first choice when adopting Native children. Like Native children should go to Native families because we've seen what happens when you cut someone from the culture and it's atrocious. And, the racism in the system that allows like a white family to adopt a Native child over a Native family, like a Native relative. So you have this law or this Act in place so you can make sure that Native children go to Native families. But it's always being tested and so like you know people need to understand that and understand the context of why that's important and why it's important to have people connected to the culture

first and why it's important that [chuckle] you know they used to sell Native kids for like ten dollars [chuckle], and why like, why this law is in place and why all these laws are in place. And especially as we're being tested more and more and they will continue to be tested because it's talking about land access and hunting rights and –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TAILYR IRVINE: – all those things are really controversial especially for someone who wants to hunt on tribal land but can't.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TAILYR IRVINE: And they feel like it's their right that they should be able to do that and the fact that there is not dedicated desks at the largest papers in this country to specialize and cover and the fact that there's not a single Native photo editor or editor in general is atrocious to me. I, I, again I can't believe [chuckle] that's, that it's 2022 and that's a thing. Because like you said, like, if people have story ideas but if the editor doesn't understand a story and can't sell it to their top editor then the story doesn't go. And so having that diversity and having people in who make the decisions of what goes and what doesn't go [indiscernible] you to have a voice.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. Well, as we begin our Q&A I will start with the audience here in-house but I'd like to again welcome the virtual audience at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. So, let's first take a question – house lights are coming up a little bit – we'll take a question from someone in the audience if you just want to raise your hand? Anyone have a question? Right over here, Kate. Thank you.

Q: [Indiscernible] –

DR. HOFFMAN:       Oops is that on? Is that on?

KATE:                Yes.

Q:                    Thank you both so much. You are both so accomplished in so many different ways in the stories that you tell and the visibility that you bring to the stories that you tell. So, as a faculty member here I am curious what advice you would have for the students in the audience here. What kind of skills do you feel are necessary to become a successful photo journalist, to become so skilled at data visualization and storytelling through it? So, just kind of curious about what kind of advice you might have for, for students in the group who might be interested in aspiring to what you do someday?

DR. HOFFMAN:       Great question.

DENISE LU:           I would say if you're interested in data viz, and I'm sure in photo journalism, you should just do, do it.

TAILYR IRVINE:      [Chuckle]

DENISE LU:           I think [chuckle] as in like don't –

AUDIENCE:           [Chuckle]

DENISE LU:           – don't like, you know, I did not receive formal training for what I do. So, I mean, I went to journalism school but, you know, like I feel like a lot of this I learned sort of on my own and there's resources out there. It's not, I feel like, I guess what I'm trying to say is don't feel like there's such a high barrier to entry. You should just get your feet wet and start, you know, trying to figure it out, how to; I think the best way of learning is just by doing, you know?

DR. HOFFMAN:       And we were looking at the, the student newspaper, *The Review*, today, you were looking at a data visualization –

DENISE LU:           Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: I don't know who did that one of the front page under the fold but we were, we were examining that from a, a data visualization perspective. So, yeah, there are opportunities here while you're at UD as students to, to try these things out. Tailyr did you want to respond?

TAILYR IRVINE: Yeah, I echo what you say too but I think also just being curious and asking questions and like everything, like you know, like why is that the way that it is? Like, why do they do that? Who is that? Like, what are they doing? How come they get to do that and I can't do that? Like, pushing, like just being nosey and asking a bunch of questions and kind of being buggy [chuckle] and like figuring out where things come from and why that happens. And if you're curious about something like odds are other people are too and if you find a story that resonates with you as a college student or as a woman or a man or anything, like, other people will relate to it too. And I think if you push to find what interests you and what you are curious about then, then you'll find, find a way to do it and it's, it's just a way to get where you want to go [chuckle] honestly.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, I think that some of it is just about having kind of that confidence that I think, if I'll be frank, a lot of white men in the room already have and I think that particularly for women and women of color it's like you have to kind of almost fake that until you –

DENISE LU: Um-hum.

TAILYR IRVINE: Fake it 'til you make it. That's what I do all the time –

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

TAILYR IRVINE: – honestly

DENISE LU: [Laughter.]



DR. HOFFMAN: And like there's nothing wrong with that. I think that that's actually, that gets you in the door, that gets you in the room, that gets you in a place where people might be actually listen to you. So, thank you for those, those good pieces of advice. Do we have another question from the audience? And I don't see one yet from the OLLI group. But I will be keeping an eye out for that. Yeah. Debbie.

Q: Thank you both so much for those great talks. Tailyr, my field is preservation of photographs.

TAILYR IRVINE: Oh, [indiscernible].

Q: And yours are just beautiful. And I assume they're, are they digital?

TAILYR IRVINE: Yes [chuckle].

Q: So you're working entirely in digital. I'm wondering what your hopes are for the future in terms of your own work? Where would you like to see it? How do you want see it preserved as you look into the future and at the preservation of your work?

TAILYR IRVINE: That's a great question. [Chuckle.]

Q: – [indiscernible] –

TAILYR IRVINE: Well [indiscernible] –

Q: – stunning those portraits are just beautiful.

TAILYR IRVINE: Thank you so much. I'm like a, like a day to day person. Like I don't know what I'm doing tomorrow [chuckle] –

DENISE LU: [Laughter.]

TAILYR IRVINE: – but I think ideally I would just like my photos be in a place where people can see them and learn from them. I think, you know, like it

doesn't do anyone any good if my photos are just sitting on my hard drive which a lot of them are right now. But I think finding a place for them where they can just live for a while and if it's outside or if it's the archives of paper. Like someplace people can go to learn if they want to learn more about the subjects. I think eventually down the line hopefully I'll go into photo editing when I'm done taking photos but I love taking photos so much I can't imagine [chuckle] not doing that right now. But I think, eventually I think I'd like to see like a collection go somewhere, I don't know where whether that's my own tribal museum or if it's somewhere like in Montana or bigger. Like, I just want to see them somewhere where the people can have access to them when they want, when they – it's not going to anyone any good when I die and like they just go with me. [Chuckle.] So like, anywhere that people have access to them and they use them however they like.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. Do we have another question from audience?  
All the way in the back, Millie.

Q: Hi. First all thank you. This question is more directed towards Tailyr. As somebody; I take photos; your work is outstanding.

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.] Thank you.

Q: It's beautiful. How does one go about taking photos of people without acting like they're a subject and they're just like there and embed yourself in the situation and be respectful but also like, you know, have fun, like with your job?

TAILYR IRVINE: Yeah, I think like the most important to do is remember that they're people. I think, like right now we're getting our photo taken and I'm really uncomfortable –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

TAILYR IRVINE: – and it's really good to remember that. Like, [laughter.] what other people when you photograph the people that's uncomfortable and it's in a way starts out that way but I think like the key really just to spend time with someone. Like, you know, if you have the camera out the whole, like, they get used it, they see it, it's not like as threatening. And I tell people at the beginning of stories, like, make sure they know what they're getting into. Like, I'm going to stalk you for a very long time; like it's going to be creepy, it's going to be weird; I'm going to be in the corner. Like, I'm not going to talk to you [chuckle] and I'm going to let you do your thing. But I just let me know what they're getting into and then there's not like you know mid-story where they're like you're here all the thing. Like that's really uncomfortable. It's like, no I told you, I told you I was going [chuckle] to be here all the time. And I think that makes it fun when they are comfortable and you understand them. Like before I usually pick up my camera I talk to them a little bit and let them know what I'm doing, what to expect, where the photos are going and I offer to give them, them copies a lot of the time too. And that makes them a little more happy because they're giving their time and their giving their story. And like I couldn't do what I do without them. And I think it's really important as journalists for us to remember that. We don't treat them as subjects or as these characters in [chuckle] our stories. They're people. They're humans and we can't do our job without them and I think it's really important to remember that when you go do stories. But the more comfortable they are the more fun it is to photograph, the more comfortable you are and I think you just play off each other a lot. So if you come in and you're confident and you tell them what to expect then, then they can feed off of that, like the

energies match and it's, it gets to be really fun.

DR. HOFFMAN: A couple of things you said earlier today that I took note of as, as an amateur photographer is that people are, it's a lot like when you're taking pictures of children that, you know, [chuckle] at first the kids are like there's a camera and then you sort of have to wait 'til they like, they kind of forget that there's a camera there and you take their picture. And then the other thing you said was get closer. Can –

TAILYR IRVINE: Yeah, that's like the, the cliché in photography, right? If you're not getting a good photo get closer. Or if you're not taking interesting photos like stand in front of more interesting things [laughter] and be like, it's really simple but those are like the big advice.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you so much. Do we have another question from the audience? Or from one of our – oh, right back here, Kate.

Q: This question is for Tailyr. Hi. Thanks –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Chuckle]

Q: – thanks to both of you for being here. I'm fascinated and know very little about that whole percentage of blood thing with the tribe. Has Ancestry.com and 23andme – oh –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

Q: – oh what a face.

DENISE LU: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

Q: Answer the question.

TAILYR IRVINE: No, it's a great question. [Chuckle] Ancestry.com and 23andme, that, it's not real. That's not how you determine Nativeness (sic) and

it's not a real thing. I get a lot of DM's from people like I found out that I am 50 percent Native on Ancestry.com or on whatever, 23andme, and I'm just like so are your parents' full blood then? Like, like how do I get, like how do I get benefits. And I'm just like –

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh my goodness.

DENISE LU: [Gasp.]

TAILYR IRVINE: – I'll be like I can't. Like, those things, they're not accurate. Like every tribe determines eligibility and citizenship and that's completely complicated quite a bit. I know there are some tribes who get calls and calls and calls and calls and calls after someone takes a test and they want to be like, how do I get or they'd be like I found out I'm half but I don't know which tribe. And it's like, then you're not half are you because you would know which tribe if your parent is full blood. Like [chuckle] you would understand that and tribes keep meticulous records going back from the 1800's that if you wanted to figure out if you have the ancestry or if you think you do you can call the tribe and they have those records. Like, I know my family tree up until the 1800's. And it's written down with the blood quantum number and the fractioning so you can see where it comes from. And so, the ancestry and the DNA like it's just not, it's not real. [Laughter.] It's not a real thing.

DR. HOFFMAN: It complicates things for Native people because –

TAILYR IRVINE: It does.

DR. HOFFMAN: – it brings in a lot of other folks who are like, hey, like –

TAILYR IRVINE: Like, hey, I'm Native too and I'm like , like if, people just want to take the experience but don't have any experience and it's really like, it's appropriation and it's exhausting and I deal with it constantly especially when I'm

in a place where there's not a big Native population. That means there's not a lot of people to check people who say that they're Native, right? So you can get away with saying it for a long time if you never met a Native person in your life. But if you have that same energy, if you go onto a reservation and [indiscernible] with that like maybe, [chuckle], maybe your great, great, great grandma is a Cherokee. Like that's like the biggest folklore in a lot families trying to claim Native ancestry.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

TAILYR IRVINE: Its, it's exhausting and a lot of tribes deal with it and a lot of tribes are exhausted by it. [Chuckle]

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you for that question. That was really; I hadn't thought of that. Let's take another question from a student? I think we've got one in, right in the middle, smack dab so –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – Millie, why don't you pass your microphone over there?

Q: Hi, this is a question for Tailyr. you talked about its blood quantum, right?

TAILYR IRVINE: Um-hum.

Q: So, has that been incorporated or a part of Native American tradition post colonialism or pre-colonialism? Is it something that has just been implemented or has it always been a part of the culture?

TAILYR IRVINE: Yeah. So blood quantum is a colonial construct, it comes from colonization. Basically the government wanted to know how many Natives there were because they wanted to know, like, you know, what the, what the threat was essentially and especially when they started to force Natives onto

reservations. They needed the, a way to keep track of who was where and doing what. And, essentially like government agents went to reservations or tribes and decided who was Native and who was not Native and clearly there's a lot laws in that system of someone who is not from the community deciding who is. So you had them leave out people who looked black. They said you're not Native, you're black. Or people were able to bribe themselves to be on the rolls and so it's not a system that we ever used before. It's just one that made up; historically Native tribes always intermixed. Once like, so for example my brother and Leah, this was like historical. Leah would just become part of tribe and their kid would be Salish and Kootenai because it's born on the reservation and it's growing up on the reservation. It's learning the Salish and Kootenai traditions. [Chuckle] Like, the person, the spouse becomes part of the tribe and then you keep going. Like it's not something that you quantify or that you decide and it's really just through colonization and through that structure that it was placed into our constitutions and to our governments and so it's really difficult to change because our entire government systems are built around the blood quantum.

DR. HOFFMAN: It's a really complicated issue that I think a lot of us, before today, a my students and even myself, I don't think really understood and it's been [chuckle] really enlightening to hear this explanation. It looks like we do have a question coming in from the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. So, waiting for that. Not a question. –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – but we're thoroughly enjoying –

DENISE LU: [Laughter.]

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – the discussion and learning a lot from the audience questions. Thank you so much. We're glad that –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – you're, you're here. We're certainly enjoying it too. Well, I think I'll probably go ahead and, and, and wrap – unless there's one more final question? Yeah, let's take one more and then I will wrap things up.

Q: I have a question for Denise. So, you said you never really learned what you're doing now in your original journalism education. How did you find your way to like your current job?

DENISE LU: [Chuckle]

Q: How did, how'd you get there?

DR. HOFFMAN: You just, you walked into *The New York Times* –

DENISE LU: [Laughter.] Ah –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

DENISE LU: – well, ah, okay. Well, so basically I went to journalism school but my journalism school didn't really teach that much like data viz or at, at the time that I was there at least. I took like a couple web and journalism classes but they didn't really teach me much. But, I basically got into this industry because I was sort vaguely interested in this and it was through an internship program my college did. And so I just very, I was very lucky and I got placed into, I got placed into the graphics team at *The Washington Post* and then I just went from there. Yeah. So like I got lucky but I was [chuckle] I did work very hard [chuckle] but yeah, it was something that I was just interested in, and, and I learned a lot of it on the job, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: And I mean I think not working too probably, making





connections with people –

DENISE LU: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – always matters. Okay. Thank you for that question. So, I think we’re going to wrap things up here. We have some, I have some announcements to make about upcoming speakers, upcoming events and then we’ll give our speakers a, a final thank you for being here. But I want to mention that our next event is not actually for a few weeks. National Agenda usually is every other week or so. We’re taking a bit of a, a break just because of timing and it doesn’t really matter. But our next event is going to be our Delaware Debates that happen on October 20th. This will be virtual event. It will be an in-studio debate for our congressional representative, Lisa Rochester and Lee Murphy. And that will be at 7:00 p.m. Our founding director of the CPC, Ralph Begleiter will be moderating that debates. So, typically pre-Covid we would have our debates on a stage here at the University of Delaware; have an audience participation but we’ve decided to just kind of move that into a, a more of a virtual experience. So will be able to watch that live and experience that with veteran journalists and founding director of the CPC, Ralph Begleiter. I’d also like to point our next speaker which will be the following week, October 26<sup>th</sup>. Another UD alum. We featured Paul Kane as one of our first speakers. This semester he was a, a, is a journalist at *The Washington Post*. So we’re featuring all the, the major newspapers here. And she was also a writer for *The Review*, the student newspaper here and now writes for *The Review*, I’m sorry, for *The Atlantic* [chuckle] –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

DENISE LU: [Laughter.]



DR. HOFFMAN: Did write at *The Review*, now writes for *The Atlantic* monthly, one of the oldest political magazines in, in the country. So that'll be right here on this stage, October 26th at 7:30. Also, we'll be streaming live and hopefully our Osher friends will join us as well. I also want to mention that, that this is an election year, in case anyone missed that. It's the midterm election year. We want our Blue Hens to be active citizens. We've created a lot of programming; if you want to scan this QR code it'll take you to our website that gives you lots of information about how to register to vote if you're not registered; even if you are registered, how to sign up for TurboVote which will guide you into where to vote, where you're polling place is, how to get an absentee ballot, all of the kinds of things that you need to know about voting because as we've heard today in some communities voting is, is difficult and I think in, in remote communities in, in communities of, of, of color it's, its – so basically we're trying give University of Delaware students every opportunity they can to vote in these very important midterm elections. Generation, Generation Z is, and with Millennial's, are the largest voice in the country right now yet they tend to vote at the lowest amount in midterm elections in particular.

So, I encourage our, our Gen Z and Millennial students and alumni to make sure that you are involved as well as our, our older, our older community members as well. We also have subscribed as a university to something called Issue Voter. Again, if you scan the QR code you'll be led to that. This is how you can hold your elected representatives accountable after you vote for them. So, you can identify which issues you really care about, say climate change or abortion right, and you'll be notified through this app that your elected representative is voting on a bill today related this issue. Here's how you contact



him or her. Here's how you send an email, here's how you send a, a text. So, it's really a way to follow through on after you've voted to make your, your vote matter. And then I want to remind the community, not just our UD students but older community members, faculty, staff, people in the Newark community and people in Delaware for our Voices of UD annual essay project. This is, we'd like to invite you to consider yourself, consider if you are more than a number. America is experiencing an historic era of polarization We've seen citizens taking to the streets to protest police brutality, election fraud allegations, immigration, gun violence and we encourage students and people in the community to share your voice, share your opinion. Help us understand what UD and the UD community is thinking. Some of these essays have ended up airing on Delaware Public Media; we've often put them on our website. There's also a contest that students can, can enter to win prizes for, but we ask you to, for example reflect on a personal experience in which you felt you were treated like a number. How did this experience affect your life? How have you reacted to that? What actions have you taken? What do you think is the eventual impact on society, personal relationships, the political process? These are both audio or video essays. We have the [snapping fingers], what's that called, the Multimedia Studio? What's that called in the bottom of the library, the basement of the library? Multimedia Learning? There are lots of equipment [chuckle] \

DENISE LU: [Chuckle]

TAILYR IRVINE: [Chuckle]

DR. HOFFMAN: – and people who can help you put together cool videos, cool audio essays for students here and community members. But, ya'll are on Tik Tok and Instagram –

DENISE LU: [Chuckle]

DR. HOFFMAN: – you know what you're doing right? So make your voice heard in a way that really matters and helps us understand as, as, as faculty, as administrators at the university what's really going on with, with students. And then finally, I want to remind folks to be on the lookout for my students, some of who are in the audience tonight, who you might see on campus holding signs that say Free Intelligent Conversation. We just engaged in one of these over, over dinner. They're a great way to sort of find ways to connect with community without having to have the barriers of what party are you, who did you vote for in the election. Sometimes we just need to find ways to connect with each other and see the humanity in each other. And this has been a really fun project that I have been working on with the founder of Free IC, Kyle Emile since 2019 here at the University of Delaware. And I'm happy to say that we are one of the first universities to actively make this part of our curriculum. My students are required to go have conversations with people on campus. So, be on the lookout for students carrying these signs. One example of a question that I'll, I'll leave you with that is one these suggested Free Intelligent Conversation questions that I don't know if this came up in any other your conversations this evening but one of my favorite questions is what is your secret sauce that makes you, you? This is a fun question and I encourage you to think about this as, as you leave the, the theater tonight and as you, as you, we wrap up because sometimes people will actually answer with like a sauce? Like –

TAILYR IRVINE: [Chuckle]

DR. HOFFMAN: – barbeque sauce.

DENISE LU: [Laughter.]

TAILYR IRVINE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Some people – is that what you were thinking?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Some people will say, you know, well it's, it's my, my passion for photography or you know, it's, it's, it's a really great question that helps you learn something about the people around you at, at, at low stakes, like, the, we, we don't have to always be on and have an opinion about every political issue [chuckle], around every cultural issue. I think that there are many ways and, and this is one of them where we can find ways to connect with one another. So, so I want to again, thank you all for joining us. Please visit [cpc.udel.edu](http://cpc.udel.edu) for more of our programming. Be sure to follow us on social media. We're on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, I think that's it. I don't think we have a Tik Tok yet. Maybe we should. Thank you again to our guests. Please give them a big round of applause.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you so much and I hope to see you back here on October 26th right here.

TAILYR IRVINE: Cool.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

# # #