



NATIONAL AGENDA

MIDTERM MATTERS

GABE FLEISHER

YOUNG VOICES MATTER



HOSTED BY

University of Delaware
Center for Political Communication
With support from the Office of the Provost
Cosponsored by the Department of Political
Science and International Relations, College of Arts
and Sciences, University of Delaware

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Lindsay Hoffman

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

Gabe Fleisher

Gabe is the 16-year-old publisher of political
newsletter *Wake Up to Politics* and has more than
50,000 subscribers. He has been featured in the
New York Times, NPR, and in TBS' *Full Frontal
with Samantha Bee*.

Transcript of Event

Date:

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Place:

Mitchell Hall, University of Delaware,
Newark, DE



DR. HOFFMAN: Welcome to the Eighth Annual National Agenda Speaker Series, and, brought to you by the University of Delaware Center for Political Communication with support from the Office of the Provost. Thank you. I am Dr. Lindsay Hoffman; I'm the Director of the National Agenda Speaker Series and the Associate Director of the Center for Political Communication. This year's theme -- Midterm Matters. As you heard the students in the opening, the midterms do matter. Students tend to not vote in the midterms, um, and part of the reason we're here is to encourage students to make sure that they get out and vote in the midterms. And by the way, the voter registration deadline for Delaware is October 13th. So, if you're a Delawarean make sure you register to vote. We are a non-partisan organization. We've featured speakers across the spectrum. You might recall last fall I spoke with former Vice President Joe Biden and Governor of Ohio, John Kasich who is a republican. Our last speaker was a cybersecurity expert and an alum of the University of Delaware, Dave DeWalt. It kind of made me want to put my tinfoil hat on but it was definitely an interesting conversation.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: You can find the podcast and the video on our site at cpc.udel.edu. All of our programs are available to watch there. Our goal here is to really model civil dialogue and to speak for Americans from across the, the spectrum, and the divides facing our country. So, tonight's event is cosponsored by the Department of Political Science and International Relations. Thank you, Professor David Redlawsk. And all of our events this semester can be found, again, at cpc.udel.edu/nationalagenda. Coming up we're going to be hearing

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from a writer the Daily Show with Trevor Noah; and after the election we're going to have a post-election aftermath with two Washington Post Pulitzer Prize winning journalists. And of course, the Delaware Debates will happen right here, one week from tonight, October 17th. You will need tickets so go to the Delawaredebates.com or, Stephanie, I'm looking at you –

STEPHANIE: [Indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: Delawaredebates. –

STEPHANIE: -- .org.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- org. -- [laughter.] -- for, to get ticket information. Um, this is also the second year of our annual audio essay contest with the theme Voices Matter. So, we're encouraging students to tell their story about what it's like to talk about politics on this campus at UD. And there are cash prizes. So, that may motivate some of you. If you appreciate these events, please sign up for the Center for Political Communication email list in the lobby before you leave. Also, consider supporting the CPC so we can, can, we can keep bringing you such high-quality programming. Just go to cpc.udel.edu/support. We will have an audience Q and A at the end of this talk. But you can also tweet at us if you're watching online using the hashtag #udelagenda on Twitter and you can join the discussion. Here in Mitchell Hall we'll be using a Catchbox. It's actually a microphone we're going to toss back and forth with two of our students from National Agenda who will be monitoring. So, before we get started, I want to remind the audience that civil and courteous dialogue is expected and it's vital to the success of this particular speaker series. Enter this space curious, open-minded and compassionate and you can come away with some real solutions for constructive communication. So, let's all agree to be candid and courteous of

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other people's views. I'd also like to point out that last I checked we had some student volunteers out in the lobby who are registering students to vote. If you are interested, they will be here after the event ends as well. And, we have a ballot box where you can actually pledge your vote to vote on November 6th and we will be emailing you to remind you to vote on November 6th. So, tonight, without further ado, Gabe Fleisher. His love for politics and history began at an early age when he attended the 2009 Presidential Inauguration of Barack Obama. In 2011 he began publishing his own daily political email to send to a lone subscriber, his mom.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Seven years later *Wake Up to Politics* is sent to more than 50,000 readers across the country and the world, and he has 23,000 followers on Twitter. Gabe has interviewed political figures including Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, Sandra Day O'Connor, Martin O'Malley, Rand Paul, Ben Carson. He has received press credentials to cover numerous presidential primary debates in Iowa, presidential addresses, caucus meetings, candidate rallies. All of those things that you guys attend here, right?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: He's published a book, *Here Us Roar*, history of his elementary school.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: And he's editor-in-chief of his high school newspaper called *The World*. He's also a recipient of the 2014 Lincoln Forum Student Scholarship and the Kids Voting Missouri Pioneer Award at, all at 16 years of age. He actually turns 17 on, what was election day in 2016, November 8th. So, wish him

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a happy birthday. So please join me – Gabe’s going to give a little bit of a talk before we sit down and have a Q and A – but please give me, join me in giving him a big Blue Hen welcome to the state of Delaware.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, [indiscernible].

GABE FLEISHER: Thank you. So, like Dr. Hoffman said, I’m just going to, want to talk a little bit before we start about what brought me here because some of you might be wondering. And then a little bit more about why I think young voices matter. So, like Dr. Hoffman said, I first got interested in politics during the 2008 elections when I was about seven years old. I really think during an election year politics are just kind of all around us, from yard signs to bumper stickers to TV ads and feeling out the whole process made me really curious. I started asking questions and reading more and more about history and politics until the interest became a full-blown passion. And, um, so, I, I read really as much as I could get my hands on about politics and history and I kept on reading and writing and kind of building a knowledge base. And the newsletter started a few years later in 2011 when I was nine. Here’s kind of an, an early version of it. And, to tell the story of how it got started I’m going to show a clip from TBS’s *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee*. You can see me explaining it, explaining how it got started to that correspondent, Ashley Nicole Black, who I understand spoke from this stage a few years ago as part of the National Agenda Speaker Series.

VIDEO CLIP:

Gabe Fleisher: [Indiscernible] the newsletter I was in third grade. I would always like kind of be talking about politics with my mom and I’d be telling her different things, what I was reading in the news, and she would always

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just have to get to work. So, she's like, just put in an email. And so, I did.

Ashley Nicole Black: Oh.

Gabe Fleisher: [Indiscernible].

Ashley Nicole Black: So, you started a newsletter because your mom didn't want to talk to you?

Audience: [Laughter.]

Gabe Fleisher: Good joke.

Ashley Nicole Black: What does Gabe put in his newsletter for his mom to ignore?

Gabe Fleisher: I actually did White House, Congress, courts, elections, what's going on today, what happened since I sent the newsletter out yesterday. And then –

GABE FLEISHER: And so, I did put it in an email like my mom said. It's a bit kinder than how they portrayed it on *Full Frontal* but that captures the main idea.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: And so, I started sending my mom a little rundown of what was happening in politics which I called *The Daily Rundown*. And I culled it from different things I was writing and thinking about and, like, just like on the last slide one of those early newsletters but I, I think I've developed hopefully a little bit as a journalist since then. And, so she started sending the newsletter to family and friends, and an audience of one is now over 50,000. My readers truly do span from kids my age and younger to politicians, journalists and staffers at the highest levels of politics and journalism including lawmakers, executive branch staffers, reporters, and executives at NBC, CBS, CNN, Politico, the Washington Post, the New York Times, and more. And, and as you can see, I've had the

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opportunity to appear at some of those outlets which has been a huge source of growth. I even made it into *Cosmopolitan Magazine* –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: -- where the editor-in-chief is a daily reader and she wrote about it [indiscernible] politics.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: But from the beginning my goal each morning has remained the same: to offer my readers a comprehensive yet understandable briefing on the news which remains concise but doesn't dumb anything down. Especially now, I think that formula is one that comes in handy for a lot of people and I, I hear from all kinds of people whether they're very politically active or whether it's the one thing they read in the morning who, who tell me how much they rely on the newsletter which, which really means a lot to me. I particularly love hearing from teachers who tell me they share the newsletter in their classrooms and even have built it into their curriculum. And there's some teachers who have told me that they quiz their students on *Wake Up to Politics* which I don't think I would like but it, its cool to hear.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: And, so, basically each morning I, I try to include kind of the, the latest news in, in all kinds of forms of national politics, White House, Congress, courts, elections and, um, and I, I also try to include the schedules for the President and Congress and the Supreme Court to, to try to give my readers a, a view of what's really going on in Washington and, and that's a, a feature of the newsletter that I, I've done since the very beginning and, and it's not something that's super accessible online, um, on, on other outlets so, so I'm, I'm

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really proud, proud that I offer that each morning. And I try to write the newsletter in a completely non-partisan fashion, one that doesn't hype things up or try to scream at you; just calmly giving facts and allowing you to form your own opinions. It's the same model I've been using and perfecting since I was nine and I think its never been more important. And, um, and I, and I really do hear from conservatives, liberals, people's, people of all political perspectives who, who write me and, and tell me that they read the newsletter and they also made fun of this a little bit on Samantha Bee about kind of my, my adherence to giving an opinion and I'll show you that clip.

VIDEO CLIP:

Reporter: So, how would you report on this interview that you're sitting through?

Gabe Fleisher: I mean, maybe, you know, like nice kid gets bullied for comedy.

Reporter: How about nice kid gets bullied for comedy by a beautiful woman?

Audience: [Laughter.]

Gabe Fleisher: That might be veering into opinions and that might be getting a little away from fact.

Audience: [Laughter.]

Reporter: Okay, so my opinion –

Gabe Fleisher: No, it's not a fact.

Audience: [Laughter.]

Gabe Fleisher: [Laughter.] All right, that might, you know, words that, you know, carry, you know, seductive –

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Reporter: Don't take, don't try to [indiscernible] –

Gabe Fleisher: -- suggestion –

Reporter: -- communicate it now, Gabe. It's fine.

Audience: [Laughter.]

Reporter: If I only get one opinion out of the kid –

Audience: [Laughter.]

Reporter: We'll be right back.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.] And, and when I can I also try to get out of my bedroom and see the stories I'm reporting on up close and personal. You can see pictures of me here with Ted Cruz, Ben Carson, Debbie Wasserman Shultz, Hillary Clinton, some of the politicians I'm able to meet and interview. During the 2016 cycle I attended two primary debates in Iowa, and you can see a picture of me there, kind of in the spin room with some of the candidates. I, I attended the Democratic debate in November 2015 and actually while I was there I started talking to the then communications director for the Republican National Committee, Sean Spicer. And, he was the one who actually secured me credentials to come to the Republican debate a few months later in Iowa and then obviously went on to favoring for me, I guess, depending on how you look at it.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: And, you also see me here with Jill Stein, the 2016 Green Party presidential nominee who came to St. Louis during the election. I was one of the only journalists that showed up for that event and got to interview her one-on-one. And I'm credentialed to see a lot of politicians when they've come to St.

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Louis: Joe Biden, both Clintons, Scott Walker, Mike Pence, Jeff Sessions, Steve Bannon. And just recently a few weeks ago, there was a conference put on by the, the group founded by the late Phyllis Schlafly (phonetic spelling) in St. Louis and of, of, um, kind of pro-Trump republicans including former national security adviser Michael Flynn and I covered that a few weeks ago and got to interview a number of the attendees and participants and speakers and that was a very fascinating experience. In November of last year, I was credentialed to hear the president, President Trump speak in St. Charles. I've heard him again speak, um, in Granite City, Illinois. And, um, I, you know, and both times he kind of pointed out to the fake news media in the back and the whole room booed us which, which was a very fascinating experience. And I, I, I really, and here I am, um, at Air Force One landing at, at a, for another presidential visit to St. Louis. And so, it's a lot of fun for me to be able to, to go to some of those events and I do feel like, you know, just another journalist, but there are times when kind of my status as high school student kind of gets in the way and poses obstacles. But, but mostly that's kind of just taught me the importance of being persistent and a lot of lessons that are, that are very valuable for me as a journalist. So, they, they've all been really great experiences. And, I, I'm often asked if I think I'm an outlier in my generation and I really don't. And for proof I think you need look no further than the past year as a small group of teenagers from Parkland, Florida in spite of the movement of young people aimed at changing laws in our country. And that's been replicated all over the country all year groups of youth from all political persuasions, you know, realizing that they have a voice, realizing that their voice matters and speaking up. And, part of why I think young voices matter is because I truly believe we think and talk about politics differently. I

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think part of the appeal of *Wake Up to Politics* is that I'm a teenager writing from the Midwest which gives me a different perspective than many of the adult political reporters based in New York or D.C. Similarly, from what I see of my own school and in other venues, I think young people talk about politics in a more civil way and are more open to listening to each other in a way that is really necessary right now in our political dialogue. And because of our foothold in social media young people also have a unique way in getting our opinions out and discussing politics in a different forum and connecting with our elected officials. There's different issue sets that I think matter to young people and so many of the issues affect us much more acutely because we'll be left with the consequences of the decisions made by today's politicians. And from my own experiences and from what we've seen in the past year it is clear to me that a critical mass of young people are engaged in politics and following the news. However, there is a clear disconnect between young activists and young voters. We often hear from young people who think their voices do not matter that their vote holds no weight. But, that couldn't be farther from the truth. According to the Pew Research Center in the 2016 elections, millennials, voters aged 20 to 35, made up the second largest block of eligible voters in the country. 62 million millennials were voting age citizens, 27 percent of the electorate just behind the 70 million baby boomers, those aged 52 to 70, who comprise 31 percent of the electorate. Yet, millennials had the lowest voter turnout rate of any generation, 51 percent, just barely more than half. The generation with the highest voter turnout, the silent generation, those 71 and older, was the one that makes up the smallest share of the electorate. They are just 28 percent of eligible voters but 71 percent of them cast a ballot on election day giving them a hugely

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disproportionate say over the results. Young voices matter because if we want it to we could dictate the outcome of every election by [indiscernible] of the growing proportion of the electorate young voters now control. And by 2020 that will be a higher share than any other generation including the baby boomers. And, this trend is even starker in midterm elections like the ones that are fast approaching. According to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement or CIRCLE (sic) just 20 percent of 18 to 29-year-olds cast ballots in the 20, 2014 midterms; the lowest rate of youth turnout recorded in the past four decades. In the same study, just 47 percent of young people said they were even registered to vote. And, and I think the reason the Parkland activists struck a cord with so many young people is because it finally offered proof that not only did their voices matter in elections but that elections matter to them. And there are innumerable issues that impact young people from gun control to climate change to education and in some in literally matters of life and death. And these issues are on the ballot at every level whether it is choosing the politicians that will vote on them in congress or state legislatures or in ballot propositions in each state. But there do seem to be signs that this is changing in this election. CIRCLE, the group I cited before, just released their 2018 Youth Engagement Survey of Americans Aged 18 to 24 and found that 34 percent of people in the demographic are extremely likely to vote which may seem small but would be a game changing increase from past midterm years. 50 percent of young people in the survey who said they had been touched in some way by the Parkland movement said they were extremely likely to vote. Another data point from earlier this week after Taylor Swift linked to vote.org in an Instagram post encouraging her followers to register, the website reported an unprecedented

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flood of voter registrations nationwide; 65,000 in the 24 hours after her post, more than in the entire month of August. And so, before we get to the Q and A I wanted to close with one of my favorite stories. In 1787 Ben Franklin was walking out of Independence Hall after the end of the Constitutional Convention just having signed the final document after four months of bitter debate. A woman stopped him on the street and asked the question that had been on many minds since the delegates had locked themselves in secrecy, what kind of government will it be, Dr. Franklin, she asked. He responded, “a republic, madam if you can keep it.” In other words, it’s on us. We are the custodians of the American experiment Franklin and his fellow delegates set up and young people particularly could stand to hold their influential position in the upcoming midterms. I think if we go out and vote for candidates who represent us on key issues. I love writing *Wake Up to Politics* because it gives me a really unique opportunity to try and inform people before they cast their ballot on election day. Even though I’ve been covering these elections for months and continue to do so I can’t vote in them. So, I really hope everyone here, I see a lot of students here who, who can vote takes advantage of that right and privilege and proves to the nation that young people are engaged in the democracy and that our voices matter.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. I’m going to wait for –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: -- Ben Franklin to disappear here.

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Oh, I went ahead a little bit. So, thank you again, Gabe, for being here. I know you had to miss school –

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: -- to be here today.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: You had a great *Wake Up to Politics* newsletter today that was from the Delaware Bureau –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: He was here in Delaware. So, I thought I'd give you a news quiz –

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: -- maybe –

GABE FLEISHER: Oh, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- because you missed school today.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Actually, just tell me what was the most interesting thing that happened in, in the news over the past 24 hours?

GABE FLEISHER: Well, I'll just tell you the top story that was in my newsletter this morning was that Niki Halley, the UN Ambassador who announced yesterday her intention to resign by the end of the year. So that was my main, main story this morning.

DR. HOFFMAN: That's it?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: Um, and I, let's see what else I did this morning. I also, there's some polls that I talked about for the upcoming midterms that I, like I said, I include the, the schedules for all of our elected leaders. So, the president is in Pennsylvania. I, I haven't been on my phone so I'm sure there will be some news made there at that rally. And, and I know congress is, was voting on some bills about, about to head back to the, for them to be able to campaign before the midterms.

DR. HOFFMAN: There's been a little news. You can catch up after the event.

GABE FLEISHER: Oh, no.

DR. HOFFMAN: But I wanted to point out –

GABE FLEISHER: Did I miss something?

DR. HOFFMAN: -- that –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: -- this is –

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: This is not working. Oh, yeah, here we go. I wanted to point out that Gabe after all, again, is a high school student and I loved that over the summer he was like, hey, I'm going to summer camp.

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: I'm going to halt my newsletter for a while. So, tell me what it's like to unplug and get away from the political scene and go out and from what

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I understand this is a wilderness –

GABE FLEISHER: That's right.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- so all kinds of cool things.

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, well, its, it's a lot of fun and I think it's really important to especially now. I, it can be hard sometimes to kind of leave politics behind especially because there's so much happening every day, every minute. But, but it's, it's really nice to be able to go into the wilderness with my friends and kind of have some time away and, and I also, you know, find it helps me when I get back to, you know, be able to, you know, just to take a step back and, and be reflecting more about, about what's going on and about the different trends in our political climate. It can be helpful when, when you get so bogged down in the 24-hour news cycle it, it, it can be really distracting and hard to kind of, you know, really be thinking about what's going on instead of just trying to react to every little thing. So, I, I find it really valuable to, to spend some time away.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. That's good. So, what do you do for fun, if you're not doing politics? I mean, not –

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: -- at summer camp.

GABE FLEISHER: I, I, like I, like I said coming to the class earlier today, I really do think that, you know, I, the newsletter was just something very important to me. You know, it, it, it is a big part of my life but it's really only during kind of the morning time and then beyond that I'm, I'm a pretty normal high school student. I spend a lot of time with my friends, I play sports, I, I do things any other high school student would be doing.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, so, here's a question. You are 16-year-old, years old;

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you're not yet old enough to vote as you mentioned. But you're, objectively this comes from a question – I, I like to bring questions in for my students in the National Agenda class – this comes from Noah. She says you are objectively far more educated on politics than many people who are eligible to vote. What are your thoughts on the argument of lowering the voting age to 16? And do you think 16-year-olds are responsible and mature enough to vote?

GABE FLEISHER: I mean, I, I think a lot of them are and I think it's a very interesting idea. I think that, like I said, I think politics impacts young people just as much as it affects adults and so I definitely think there's an argument to be made that young people deserve a say, even younger than 18, in the political process. I think that, um, you know, I think there's also an argument to be made that 18 is not the absolute best time to start voting. That I think it could be beneficial if voting started at an earlier age and it was paired with kind of a, a remake of civics education such that people who are starting to vote just as they were being taught in schools more about civics, more about the candidates they are voting on so they're more informed voters. And then, according to studies, the earlier people start voting the more likely they are to vote carrying on. So, and, I, I would say I, I might be more informed than a lot of my peers but, but I do think that, you know, I, I think there's a lot of adults who are not very informed on politics and there's a lot of young people that are very informed on politics. So, I, I think it's definitely an idea worth considering. I think that there's young people who are ready to take a part in the political process, but I think it's something worth talking about.

DR. HOFFMAN: Do you think we're going to see a huge increase in voter turnout among millennials and the incoming Generation Z voters in the midterms

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this year?

GABE FLEISHER: I certainly hope so. I, I think there are a lot of data points to suggest from, from recent polling that enthusiasm and energy around voting is, is much higher for young people this time around. I think it, it is always challenging especially midterm years to get young people to the polls and, and to try to convince them that it matters. But, I, I think since the 2016 election certainly I've noticed kind of a surge in interest among, you know, people my age and older, um, surrounding politics. I think particularly since, since the shooting in Parkland and, and kind of young people have really kind of actively taken a role in kind of leading social change and leading movements around politics. And, and I, and I think it's been very interesting to watch as that movement has kind of gone from not only, you know, about gun control but also encouraging voter registration, encouraging young people to take part in the process. And I, I think they are part of that, they had more, more voter registrations in the past 10 days than any other point in history. So, you know, I think there's definitely reason to be hopeful that young people are, are, you know, beginning to take more a part in their political process. We, we can only wait and see but, but I think there's reason to think that.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, this came from a, a, a, Gabe was featured in the New York Times just last year. Um, I think he was first featured in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch as being this kind of young phenom who went from having one subscriber who was his mother to having 50,000 subscribers and I, I do recommend subscribing to his newsletter. It's very informative. It's; I start my day with it. I require my National Agenda students to start their day with it. But this isn't a new thing for you. You've been political since you've been a kid. Like,

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what's, what the, what's your memory of kind of first getting involved in politics and like, what got you so interested in it?

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, my, my very first memories are really kind of just during the 2008 elections and kind of just noticing like all, you know, I think, I, my, my parents were always, you know, would talk about politics at the dinner table, it was always something a part of our lives. And, and, and, you know, seeing yard signs and just seeing politics happening. And I, you know, it's hard to know exactly what struck within me but I got very curious and I remember, you know, just really just asking about the debates and the conventions and all these things. We're in St. Louis and the Vice-Presidential Debate was that year at Wash U. And I remember us kind of going over there and seeing everything that was going on. I remember watching the conventions. And, and I just remember being really curious and, and, and wanting to know as much as I could about, about that. And, and really before I was interested in politics I was really interested in history and in the presidents and, and I kind of was, was fascinated by learning as much as I could about our system of government. And, and it kind of just never stopped and kind of grew and grew and I just started reading and reading and reading and, and try to cue in as much as I could just about, about our history and, and our system. And, and that obviously led to, to me writing about it.

DR. HOFFMAN: We talked about this a little bit in the classroom earlier this afternoon, but do you ever feel like adults don't take you seriously?

GABE FLEISHER: I, I would, I think sometimes, well, I was talking about it a little bit earlier, like I said, I've been able to be credentialed to a lot of, you know, events and debates and, and I do notice sometimes that like I, I think a, adults,

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you know, candidates kind of point to me and, and allow me to ask questions sometimes because I may seem like kind of a friendlier face or kind of an easier softball question. But, but I think I often use that to my advantage and then people are kind of surprised when suddenly I'm asking them a pretty serious question and, and so I think there are times when, you know, expectations are kind of low and I think that allows me to kind of, you know, to prove myself and, and, and, and show that, that I am a real journalist. But, for the most part, I mean most of my readers are adults and I, I am always kind of surprised when so many of them do take me seriously but I think it's a result of, I mean, I think people, you know, kind of read articles like that in the New York Times and then, you know, oh, that's interesting, you know, teenaged journalist but then when they start reading the work I think it kind of stands on its own merit I hope. And, and I think a lot of people find real value in the newsletter. So, I think there are, there are times when people are skeptical at first but I, I just think once, once they start reading I, I hope they, they begin to take it more seriously.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, so, you do have a lot of subscribers who are pretty well-known journalists, pretty well-known politicians. Who was the one person that subscribed to your pod, or your, not your podcast, your email newsletter that you were like, oh my gosh, I can't believe they're reading what I'm writing.

GABE FLEISHER: Well, actually one person who emailed me a few months ago was Fred Ryan who is the CEO and publisher of the Washington Post and he wrote me a few months ago that he reads my newsletter every morning and I was very blown away by that just because I read the Washington Post every morning and –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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GABE FLEISHER: -- the, the fact that I could add something of value to, to kind of his news diet that, that he would go to me when he has this whole newspaper.

But –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: -- so that was very cool. And he also invited me to visit the Washington Post and my going with my parents on, on Friday when we're going to go to, go up to D.C. from here. So, that was one person who like I, I, I so hugely influential in the media world that I was kind of shocked that they, they would be taking time out of their day that, to, to find that I had something to offer them.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, going back to the idea of, of the young voter in the United States today, there's an ad that came out recently from an organization called Knock the Vote and Time Magazine said that the ad was part of, it plays a, on the fact that younger Americans are less likely to show up to the polls compared with older votes, older voters as you had pointed out. Indeed, those in Generation X and younger out number older adults in terms of eligible voters by 135 million to 93 billion, 93 million of baby boomers and older. Yet, younger generations cast 21 million fewer votes in the midterm elections than older generations. So, I wanted to show this ad. It's kind of provocative. There is a little profanity, one-word profanity. I, um, will warn you of that but I think it's an interesting ad and I'm curious as to what appeal you think this ad might have to younger generations.

VIDEO CLIP: Dear young people. Don't vote. Don't vote. Everything is fine the way it is. Trump. That was us. He's our guy. Tax cuts for the rich, hell yeah. I'm rich as ***.

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AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

VIDEO CLIP: Climate change? That's a you problem. I'll be dead soon. Sure, school shootings are sad. But I haven't been in a school for 50 years.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

VIDEO CLIP: I can't keep track of which lives matter. Sure, you don't like it, so you'll like some meme on Instagram. If the weather is nice maybe you could go to one of those little marches. You might even share this video on Facebook. But you won't vote. You young people never do. But I do. I do. I do. Midterms, primaries. Every single election. We'll be there. I bet you won't. Because we're a generation of doers. Not whiners. And we're doing great.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.] [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, it is a, a partisan ad but I'm wondering if younger generations, even though you're not necessarily eligible to vote yet, respond to messages like this. How effective is that? How persuasive is that?

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, I mean, I think that's definitely a persuasive message, the idea like, like we talked about that, that we know older people do, do take their right to vote seriously and, and in large numbers and in huge numbers go out and turn out to vote and I think the idea that young people, I think that would be kind of scary that to kind of surrender, you know, that, all that influence over to people so much our senior. And, I, I especially think it's interesting how they, you know, talk about issues like climate change and school shootings because there's so many really important issues that do not, that there's such a clear divide between not affecting, you know, kind of older Americans at all and are so especially important to young people. And I think those are the issues that do

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motivate young people to get, go to the polls and, and you see very different issues motivating young people and older people. And, so that kind of reminder that when, when, kind of, you know, seniors are going to the polls that might not be filtering into what they're thinking about but, but reminding young people that, that is important to us and that, that, that those issues will affect us much more acutely. And so, it is important to go to the polls. So, I, I, I saw that ad online. I, I think it, it would be interesting to see if it, it does seem like it could be effective and, you know, kind, kind of reminding young people that, that older, if you don't vote, you know, other people will and, and you're kind of surrendering your ability to have influence over the election and, and kind of giving it over to people who have wildly different priorities than we do.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, in the interest of reaching across boundaries which is what we try to do in this program, what do you think young voters and older voters might have in common this year as they're going into the midterm elections?

GABE FLEISHER: That's interesting. I mean, I do think there's definitely issues. I think probably healthcare is one issue that kind of impacts, you know, young, young people and old. You know, I mean, there's, you know, economic issues. You know, taxes, that, that would affect, affect all Americans. I think a, a lot of economic issues, you know, even if, you know, like, even if they don't affect young people as much as we've seen yet, but, but obviously, you know, we'll be left with, you know, the deficit that is being formed now by today's politicians and so there's a lot of issues that some of us don't seem like they would affect young people as much but the reality is that whatever is decided now, you know, we will be dealing with those consequences. So, I, I don't think it's always obvious that

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there's overlap in those issues but, but most of the, you know, and I think it's very rare that there's issues that won't affect, you know, the next generation.

DR. HOFFMAN: That's a great point. Um, you were featured in the New York Times last year, which I think is how I found you, but they quoted a; the, a quote from the New York Times says that in some ways *Wake Up to Politics* is the anti-Skimm and think this is interesting because a lot of my students read The Skimm. I'll – a raise of hands, people who – so I want you to tell us a little bit about what The Skimm is. I'm assuming you've looked at it at least.

GABE FLEISHER: I have.

DR. HOFFMAN: What makes that different from what you do?

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah. And I think, you know, the The Skimm, I don't read it every morning, but I do get it and it, it's, I know it's geared I think mostly toward, towards women, towards female readers but it's a very kind of brief kind of snappy rundown of what's going on. I think really its kind of like just one sentence about each story and um, and which I think is, is valuable for a lot of people and I know a lot of people – they have millions of readers. But, but what I, I try to do and I try to be concise as well because I, I have to get to school each morning so I can't spend too much time writing up things and I know, you know, a lot of my readers have to get to work and get to school or whatever they, they don't have so much time, you know, to kind of sit down with the newsletter. But, but I, I don't, I don't try to dumb things down really. And I try, try to, um, you know, still remain very comprehensive and making sure I'm explaining things so that there's anything in my newsletter is understandable to anyone who picks it up whether it's, you know, someone who does not really pay that much attention to politics, whether it's an adult, whether it's a young person, whether it's

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someone who works heavily in politics. And, and so I, I, I try to really have a focus on really breaking things down and really explaining things and, and giving issues that, you know, the time that they're due and, and making sure that nothing is just, you know, breezed by and, and giving people kind of historical context. Like I said, I do a lot of reading about history so making sure that, you know, there, there's, there's context to all of the things that are happening. So, while it is important to me also that the newsletter is concise, I, I do try to offer, I don't try to lose any of the kind of comprehensiveness of it and, and kind of giving my readers the full picture which I think not all – there's other newsletters that are kind of in the same time, you know, do, have different priorities.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I think the, the question that came up the most today and from nearly every one of my students is how can you be non-partisan? And I know you've gotten this question before but, you know, how do you remain objective? What strategies do you use to remove your opinions from your newsletter, this is from Katie, Kaitlyn (phonetic spelling). I've seen questions from all of my students, and why do you think traditional media has such trouble with this?

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah. I, I'll say for me, I don't really find it all that difficult. I, I do try to stay non-partisan in my newsletter but really, you know, when I'm reading the news its really kind of solely through the perspective of, of trying to, to present it to my readers. So, I'm really kind of only focused on, you know, why this matter, or how I can connect it to another issue, or, or the context of it and I'm not really at all trying to think about my opinion or how I feel about, about that issue. And so, I think that can be a strategy that can be helpful for other people to kind of dispassionately, you know, think about the news. I would say for

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people who aren't reading the news from kind of a journalist standpoint I think it's, it's just very valuable to make, be conscious of what media you're consuming. And, you know, I, I saw someone say once, once that if you go through your whole day kind of consuming media and watching TV and reading the news and at the end of the day if there was nothing that you saw that you disagreed with or that challenged you or that made you kind of question yourself in some way then you're doing something wrong. And so, in terms of strategy for, for other people I would, I would just say I think it's important to make sure you're consuming media that is impartial like *Wake Up to Politics* tries to be and then also kind of opposing viewpoints from the left and the right. I, I don't know that I would necessarily agree that traditional media struggles with doing that. I know obviously there's a lot of people from the left and the right that have a lot of criticisms of a lot of news outlets. I would say certainly I think on cable news, I think it's very difficult to kind of get an objective perspective mostly because, you know, what, what sells isn't always kind of just factual boring, you know, this is what's happening, it's, this is my hot take on this, this is my opinion, this is why it's the worst thing that's ever happened. And, and so, I think on cable news often that there is that kind of struggle and, and, and I just think that's not always the best venue for, for being informed. I think there's, there's value to hearing other people's opinions and hearing commentators but you sometimes when it's just kind of a people talking over each other and not listening then, then it loses its value. So, I don't know that I would say that most traditional media struggle with it but I, I would also say something goes – but, but I would say most people have that idea that they do and so what goes along with it is media literacy and, and, and that is on, you know, the readers and on the journalists to make sure

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that it's clearly labeled when something is an opinion piece, when something is a news piece so people know what they're getting and aren't mixing up, um, an opinion piece with thinking they're, they're reading straight news. And so, I'd say that's an important part of it to, for, for media to kind of gain back its credibility in, in terms of, of being kind of neutral.

DR. HOFFMAN: I think I have a new guest lecturer for my politics in media class.

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] Wow. Thank you, Gabe. Um, I thought I'd post up here, there's are your press credentials for an event in St. Louis. What, what do you do – I know you've been very, you talk about being persistent as a high school student who's writing your own newsletter – how do you get into these events? How do you kind of go across that boundary which is usually only limited to a very elite few people.

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, so, these credentials are from when Vice President Pence came to St. Louis a few months ago [indiscernible] and campaigning with Josh Hawley (phonetic spelling) who is the republican nominee for senate in Missouri. And, the way I got into that event and other events with Trump and Pence is I, um, I, I'm kind of out on the list, the White House press list so I kind of get the forms for credentials for any of the events –

DR. HOFFMAN: Was it Sean Spicer? Is that how you --

GABE FLEISHER: No, I actually, um, I, I've reached out to – he doesn't answer my emails anymore.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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GABE FLEISHER: But, um, he, he used to. But, but, um, but really, I actually I just kind of emailed the White House and I did it a lot during the Obama years and I never got any response but I kind of kept on emailing and once Trump took office I emailed their press team. And I will say, um, I know a focus of Sean Spicer's and of Sarah Sander's and he had the Skype seats in his press briefings, he'd kind of giving, um, outlets, kind of smaller outlets, less traditional outlets kind of a way into the briefing room, a way into these kinds of events. So now that I'm on that list I, I kind of get the form anytime the president goes anywhere. I'm able to get credentials and so whenever he's come to St. Louis or Air Force One or Air Force Two has come to St. Louis I've been able to be there. And, um, and it can be kind of intimidating sometimes being [indiscernible] by those adult journalists. I, I told the story earlier in class that Attorney General Jeff Sessions came to St. Louis and I had some difficulty getting into the event. I had my credentials from the Justice Department and the security did not believe that I was supposed to be with the press. And I saw kind of all of these journalists kind of walking by and they made me kind of wave and they made the dog sniff me and they really wouldn't let me get in until there were some of the local journalists that I know who have been to other events with me kind of helped me get through and kind of proving that, that I belong there. And so, it, it has taken at times, you know, having to advocate for yourself and being persistent and keep on calling and keep on, you know, ask, you know, asking for an update on these credentials or that. But, I think, you know, those are skills that are valuable for any journalist and so I think I am lucky to have gotten them early, you know, about staying persistent and staying tough, and holding power to account and, you know, I, I think our leaders should be answering questions from all kinds of,

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all kinds of people. And when I'm at, you know, kind of debates in the spin rooms I, I try to ask questions that are kind of geared towards younger, younger people issues that, you know, might affect younger voices and I think it's important for those voices to be represented in that room. And so, I try to do that.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, one thing I wanted to talk about, a little bit about is something that's been a big conversation starter in my classroom the past couple of weeks is the Kavanaugh hearings. And, I'm curious, because you covered these hearings as a 16-year-old and there's part of me as a parent of an eight-year-old like ugh, like is he listening to all of these details. Um, I'm curious, like, ah, what were the conversations like in your high school classrooms about these hearings? I mean, you, you covered them in great detail. Um, what are high school students, what are high school juniors and seniors, sophomores and juniors and seniors talking about when it comes to these hearings --

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, I mean definitely --

DR. HOFFMAN: -- and the confirmation?

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, definitely the Kavanaugh hearings I think touched high schools in an interesting way since it kind of, you know, delved into kind of issues of sexual assault in high school, and, and, and, and those kinds of very sensitive topics but I definitely, you know, the day of, of the hearings with Dr. Ford and Justice Kavanaugh, you know, was witness to a lot of conversations among my peers. I, I do think I did notice like not across the board but I do think there's a divide between how, you know, young girls and young boys, you know, come across those issues and, and I, it, it was interesting to kind of hear a lot of debate ensue about, you know, what disqualifying and what qualifies as assault, and

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what, what is acceptable as a high schooler, what is acceptable as an adult. And, so I think those are important issues to be asking. I'll say, like, and it can be uncomfortable sometimes to be writing about it as a kid but, I mean, I, you know, I think that, that happens a lot in politics where there's uncomfortable things. In Missouri our governor, Eric Greitens, some of you may have heard about was involved in a pretty, you know, dirty sex scandal and a scandal that I covered pretty closely and interviewed a lot of the lawyers on both sides, and state legislators and that was a scandal that I covered really closely and we talked a lot about at school and, and dealt with, like, also pretty, you know, sensitive issues. So, I think politics is, you know, messy sometimes and not always clean but, but it's important to talk things through and, and its important to have those conversations.

DR. HOFFMAN: I absolutely agree, and I've been telling my students have these conversations about sexual assault, about, you know, what constitutes this with your friends, with your peer groups. I think it's very important for high school students and college students to engage in these conversations. So, Lorenzo (phonetic spelling) asks, do your friends think that it's impressive that you distribute this newsletter to 50,000 subscribers?

GABE FLEISHER: I, I think they do.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: I think for the most part they think it's cool. They, they're impressed that I'm verified on Twitter –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: -- at the very least.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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DR. HOFFMAN: You're verified on Twitter?

GABE FLEISHER: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: I'm not verified on Twitter.

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: I have adults impressed by that too –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: -- I guess --

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: -- or, or when I'm on CNN or Sam Bee or something like that. But, for the most part –

DR. HOFFMAN: No big deal.

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: I, I think, I think those, those kinds of things I think my peers think its cool and some of them, a, a lot of them are subscribed to the newsletter. I think less read the newsletter but –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: -- that's okay. But, uh, I, I think they think it's pretty cool and, and definitely a lot of my peers are politically engaged, and I talk about politics with them. And, I, I think sometimes I frustrate them because I try to play devil's advocate and try to argue from all sides and, and don't, don't try to, and don't really let them pin me down on my exact opinion which I think annoys them sometimes. But –

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AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: -- but I, I do think they, they think it's cool mostly.

DR. HOFFMAN: Politics is cool.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, so, you read a lot of books. We talked about different books that you read. Um, not very many fiction books but if there's one political book you would recommend that everyone in the audience read what book would that be?

GABE FLEISHER: I'd say the, the best book I think I've ever read about politics or history I read about a year ago called *What it Takes* by Richard Ben Cramer and it's huge, so I recommend you read it, but it will take some time. It's over a thousand pages. And it's about the 1988 presidential election and he really dedicated himself to answering the question of what it takes to be elected president and, you know, he, he starts the book by talking about it and saying that no person I have ever been friends with has ever thought they were qualified to lead the free world. And so, what happens in people's lives that lead them to the path where they convince themselves that they above anyone else should be president. And, one of the candidates in that '88 election was Joe Biden and so -- from Delaware -- and so he's a, he is featured prominently in the book and he really like embedded himself in these people's lives and, and it's really -- most of the book isn't even about the '88 campaign at all, it's not a standard campaign book. It's just about what, what makes these people tick and what, what kind of events in their lives kind of led them to public service. And so, that's a fascinating book that really opened my eyes in, in terms of just a completely

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different form of journalism than I've ever experienced, than I've ever read. The [indiscernible] of, of really getting at the heart of, of these elected officials who can seem so, you know, enigmatic and, and so removed and so mysterious but, but they're all human and there's all real things that have motivated them to where they are. And, and so, *What it Takes* by Richard Ben Cramer my number one recommendation.

DR. HOFFMAN: Write it down.

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, we hear a lot about fake news in the news media from the president, from other organizations. What do you, how do you define fake news and, I mean, I would say, argue what you provide in your newsletter is kind of the antithesis to fake news. So, what do we need to do to, I don't know, get American citizens kind of back on board of trusting news media, trusting news outlets to not be opinionated, to be able to differentiate between opinion and, and facts.

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, I mean, when asked about I, I think the term fake news has kind of lost any real meaning. I don't use it. I don't think it's all that valuable. I, I think it's original meaning, which I think, which was how I would define it, is fake news is, you know, something coming from not with absolutely no news gathering mission that, you know, is, is just exists solely to misinform and to spread false information, incorrect information. So, I do think that news outlets like the New York Times or, or other outlets make mistakes and, and do have inaccuracies sometimes but I think they correct them and, and I think that they, that doesn't qualify as fake news because they are trying to inform people,

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they're trying to inform the public unlike when we see true, what is truly fake news which is, you know, often, you know, foreign actors or, or bad actors with, with, with, um you know, negative intent to, to try to muddy the waters. I think in terms of gaining credibility back, I, I think transparency is just really important among the media. Like I said, making clear, you know, what is opinion, what is news and making sure people are understanding whether they're reading something that's supposed to be, you know, neutral or whether they're supposed to be getting an opinion when they're reading something. I think a lot of outlets like the Daily at the New York Times or, or, or other kind of new media that, that, out, that news outlets are taking advantage of to kind of take people behind the process and show that, you know, reporters are real people just trying to chase down stories and, and trying to get to sources and kind of taking them through that process I think is really valuable that, to prove to people that, you know, reporters aren't, you know, trying to misinform or, or have, or are the enemy of the people are, are trying to, you know, push out an agenda of, of one political party. So, I, I think things like that that kind of increase transparency are, are, are very important for news outlets to continue doing.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, in, in kind of following up on that, um, Amelia (phonetic spelling) has a great question, a couple of questions. What resources do you use to factcheck yourself and have you ever put wrong information into one of your newsletters and if you did how did you come back from that?

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, I mean, I am very careful about that everything I put in the newsletter is vetted. I make sure it's from sources that I trust that I think are neutral and make – I, I, I, I make sure unless I say so, unless I, I cite a specific source that everything I'm writing about has been reported by multiple sources so

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it's not just one report from a news outlet. It's something that's backed up by multiple outlets who have reported and confirmed the same thing. And, and so that's my way of, you know, vetting my information and making sure that it's, you know, been, been reported out by, by multiple organizations. I, I've never gotten anything majorly wrong in my newsletter but, but there are, you know, from time to time, you know, whether it's, you know, saying someone's, someone's from the wrong state or misdescribing someone's position or, or any number of kind of, you know, minor inaccuracies. And whenever those come to my attention the very next morning I include a banner that says corrections and, and include that, that correction and make sure I set the record straight and I think that's a very important way of, of keeping my readers trust that they see that I, I'm not trying to hide it when I make an error; it's unintentional that I made that error but that, that I'm being proactive about correcting it and I think you see the same thing in most mainstream outlets include at the bottom, you know, corrections when, when they, they've reported something that, that wasn't exactly true. So, I, I am very serious about doing that and, and, and don't try to sweep it under the rug if, if someone writes me and says, hey, that's not quite the case and, and I, I just say so.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, outside of your newsletter, which I'm sure all of your friends read religiously, what news sources are high school students your age paying attention to, or, are they paying attention to the news?

GABE FLEISHER: Interesting, I think, I think one source that I notice a lot of my friends go to is on Snapchat, Snapchat Discover where you can kind of swipe over and you can see CNN and the New York Times and, and a lot of other, NBC, a lot of other outlets kind of have their little, you know, pages, or you know,

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little videos each day of the news. So, I, I know a lot of my friends go to Snapchat, like look at the news on Snapchat Discover. I think on social media just generally on Twitter, um, on Instagram even there, they, they, they're subscribing to accounts that give them the news. I, I don't really think I know many of my friends that are, you know, reading, you know, print copies of the newspaper – I don't either – but, but or, or I think there's some who I think a lot of them have news notifications on their phone and, and are at least staying up to date with, you know, whatever CNN and the New York Times whatever notifications are happening. So, I, I think a lot of them in varying ways are, are keeping up to date on what's happening and, and often times I think its if only if it's because you open Snapchat and its right there that you can kind of see the news and, and a lot of outlets have taken advantage of that in producing original content on Snapchat which I think is really cool. And so, you know, reach, and it's a really cool way to be able to reach a whole different audience. So, I, I think there's definitely different ways that young people are getting the news but I, I do think it's getting to them.

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum. How many of you guys say you use Snapchat to get your news? Not a big population in here. Not too many. Okay. I think its going to; it, it's amazing how quickly its changed and how generations consume news so differently. Well, before I head into my last question before the Q and A I'm going to ask Parker (phonetic spelling) and Hannah (phonetic spelling) – and I don't see Hannah right – thank you, there she is. These are my students who are going to moderate the Catchbox discussion. So, this is again a microphone that's a box that we're going to toss around to each other. So, we'll moderate that discussion in just a, a moment. But, I think one question I have for you is,

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you're, you're so positive and eager and excited about what's happening in the world and I can say in my college classroom that's not always the impression that I'm getting from my students. So, from my student Steve (phonetic spelling) says what's one thing you would want college students to do to make a difference in today's political climate? Vote of course, right?

GABE FLEISHER: Yes. Yes. Register to vote [indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: But, like, what else, um, and maybe thinking about yourself when you enter college, what are some things that you can do?

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, I mean, I think there's a lot of things that high school and college students can do to get involved. I mean, I think, I think, um, I think it's very important to kind of -- I'd say the, the number one thing for me I would say is to be an informed to note only vote but you be an informed voter and be sure you're getting your information from good sources and making sure you're following up on the information and, and doing research into the candidates and issues on the ballot. I think beyond that I think um once you are starting to read up on the issues I think, you know, like I said, there's a lot that really affects young people and I think if, if you kind of find one or two that really clearly, you know, you're passionate about, you know, go, go find a candidate that aligns on that issue and, you know, work, volunteer on their campaign and knock doors or make phone calls or find a group. I'm sure there's many on campus that, you know, are advocating for those, for that issue set. So I think there's a lot of ways and especially even on social media and online there's so many ways to connect to, to other people who are likeminded and, and, and, and you can kind of make, find, find, carve your way to make a difference and, and kind of take part in a group or a campaign that, that, that's making that happen. So, I, I think there's a

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lot of ways. I, even, you know, I, I don't know what the age limit is in Delaware but in some states young people can run for office themselves and, you know, get, you know, run for city council or for different local positions.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right, there's someone in Kansas; was it Kansas?

GABE FLEISHER: There's multiple teenagers running for governor –

DR. HOFFMAN: There are multiple teenagers running for –

GABE FLEISHER: -- in Kansas. That's right.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah. And so, there's, because they found that I think they have no age limit and so –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: -- anyone can run for governor –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: -- and there's like three or four of these teenagers who are running and they're in the debates and they're making their voices heard. And they're, they have their campaigns behind them and, and, and they're making themselves a part of the local process. And even if they're not going to win they're making their issue sets a part of that campaign and making sure their opponents are talking about the issues they want them to be talking about. And so, I, I, I think there, there's a lot of ways that, that young people can, can rise up and, and make sure that what are on our minds are on the minds of our elected officials.

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh, it's so inspiring. Thank you. So, I think we're ready to have the audience Q and A so the way we'll do this is just, we've got one Catchbox –

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GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: -- we've got two volunteers on either side of the aisle here.

So, raise your hand and we'll go kind of to the nearest questioner. Maybe the first question can come from a student? That would be wonderful. From a college student. There's one right there. Is that a college student for me?

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

Q: Hello and thank you for coming tonight. Um, it's reassuring to hear that President Trump's communication team has been so responsive to your journalistic endeavors, however, this White House as a whole has not been kind to journalists. For instance, when questioned by CNN's Jim Acosta, Sarah Sanders declined to disavow President's Trump (sic), President Trump's description of journalists as the enemy of the people. As a young journalist, how do you respond to this rather hostile climate that currently exists between the Executive Branch, Branch and the press?

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, I, I think that –

DR. HOFFMAN: That's a great question.

GABE FLEISHER: That's a very good question, and I think it's complicated. I think, like I said, I, I've had a lot of interactions with, with, um, White House staffers who have always been very quick to respond to my inquiries. I, I would say this president, I, I do think it's true, has been more transparent than most of his predecessors in terms of speaking to reporters in gaggles' multiple times a day and, and talking to reporters. I think we're rarely wondering what the president is thinking at the very least.

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DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: I mean, he's very open with talking to the media. And, I think certainly there's an antagonistic relationship that's been set up but there's also, I think it's more of a love hate relationship because this is also a president who kind of feeds on media attention. It's very important to him that he's covered in the media. So, you know, I think it's complicated but at the same time while he is very accessible it is true that there have been less press briefings than in past administrations and they're very rare now. And, and, and also, you know, if you, so if you take those are, I think, kind of the day to day but the realities of covering the White House, but there's, but putting that aside there's the larger issue of this, this president's rhetoric. And, he has called the press the enemy of the people like you've said. His spokespeople have declined to disavow that. He routinely calls the press the fake news. Like I said, I've been at rallies where he's done that and booed journalists. And I think it's really harmful and really destructive to um trust in media. And you can see it declining very rapidly; people's confidence in their media which is so, I mean, it's um, I think it's John Kennedy the quote, but it's, it, the, the press is the only business protected by the Constitution, right in the First Amendment. And so, you know, that the founders recognized it and we should too that, that the free press is pivotal to our democracy and, and so, so I, it's really sad to watch as the president and other politicians demonize journalists and try to, try to um hold them up as enemies of the people or as the opposition party and I think the important thing for journalists to do is kind of ignore it and, and just keep, keep their heads down and keep at work and, and keep proving to people that, that they're not going to, you know,

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be bogged down in a personal fight but that, that we're reporting information and, and, and we're, we're trying to get to the story and we're trying to inform people. So, so it is a, you know, difficult time sometimes to be a journalist but, but also, I don't think there's ever been a more exciting time. I think it's, it's a fascinating time to be a political journalist and, and I think that it, it's, it's important to, for the media gains our credibility back and, and, and I, I think, um, I think there are ways that outlets are doing that to try to reach like I said other audiences that, that, that they're being able to do that even, even despite kind of pretty hateful rhetoric and, and dangerous rhetoric that we've seen lead to violence in some cases.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Thank you. Can we get a question from a community member? If you toss it over to Parker. It looks like there's one back here. Just do it.

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Just toss it.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

Q: Thank you. There seems to be a fairly large disconnect between what the person says when they're running for a position and then their voting record when they get into either the state or in the federal government. In your *Wake Up to Politics* do you follow the candidate from when they were running for election to their voting record when they get into either the state or the federal government and comment on their actual voting record to show maybe they're not being quite honest, maybe they are starting to morph on the issues. Do you; what I'm asking is do you follow the candidate from election

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through their voting record to –

GABE FLEISHER: It's good –

Q: -- keep them straight?

GABE FLEISHER: Um-hum, that's a good question and, and it's important. I would say, you know, I, when I started the newsletter it was, you know, pretty exclusively kind of people in St. Louis who were reading it and I would even kind of put together like a voter guide of kind of the, the races in Missouri and kind of local elections and, you know, kind of follow those candidates. But now I have readers in all 50 states and in dozens of countries so it's kind of difficult to, to, to be spending a lot of time on one candidate or one race because there's so many and, and my readers are coming from so many different places. But, I mean, I, I think certainly I, you know, when, when, if, if, if the issue really comes to the forefront I, I would talk about it but, but I would say for that I, I think more, I think that's why its very important to have local media and to have, you know, institutions in, in cities and states that, that are robustly covering politics. And, so, so I cover more national politics. I certainly cover the president and I, I cover, you know, his campaign promises and when there's been times that he has followed them or there's been times that his actions or statements have directly contradicted the statements he made during the campaign I, I report on that. When it comes to more kind of case by case on, on kind of the lower level it's kind of difficult for me to be able to devote so much time to one candidate. But, but I mean, it, it certainly, if there was one that were, were to rise to the forefront I, I would cover that. Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right, we'll take another question. But before we do that, are you anxious that you don't have your phone with you right now?

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GABE FLEISHER: I, well only because you said at the beginning that I had missed something.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: Now, now my, my mind is racing.

DR. HOFFMAN: It's, it's the markets. China.

GABE FLEISHER: Oh, okay.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Just wait.

GABE FLEISHER: Okay.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Let's take another question from a student. I know we have some younger students in the audience here who aren't necessarily college students at University of Delaware, if I'm seeing correctly. I see somebody back here. So, Parker, thank you. Way back in the middle.

Q: Um, I'm a freshman at a high school, not local, but [indiscernible]. It's around.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] Its nearby.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Um, this is really cool what you're doing all this at such a young age and you're getting to go to all these places. What's your, the favorite, what's your favorite event that you've like covered, covered?

GABE FLEISHER: It's a good question. I, I would say like I kind of talked about going to the, the two presidential primary debates in 2016, were two very fast learning experiences to kind of have covered a campaign so closely and then

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suddenly be in the room, you know, in, in the spin room and being able to ask question of – I don't, I don't know if that term, if everyone knows what that is exactly but so basically there's the debate and then afterwards a lot of the candidates and, and definitely representatives of each candidate are in the spin room and its this kind of tight chaotic and wild environment where there's, you know, kind of scrums of reporters surrounding each person and trying to yell their question at, at each candidate and which is a lot of fun to be a part of. I'll tell one story from the republican debate that I covered which, and, and it's just a lot of fun to be kind of in these environments and the day after I covered the republican debate in Des Moines I was in the elevator with my dad –

DR. HOFFMAN: This was in 2016.

GABE FLEISHER: This is in 2016. And this –

DR. HOFFMAN: January?

GABE FLEISHER: This is January, 2016, it was I believe two days before the Iowa caucuses and so just before voting was beginning in the, in the race, and I was with my dad, who was with me in Des Moines, and we were in the elevator the morning after the debate and the, this three people walked into the elevator and one of them was Senator Ted Cruz who had been in the center stage in, in the night before and would go on to win the Iowa caucuses a few days later. And, so that was kind of like a wild, like kind of thing, you know, just to be in Iowa during those caucuses and, and everyone's just kind of, you know, in the elevator and it was pretty wild to, to be right there next to him after having covered the, the debate. I told the story in the classroom that he, he was, we started talking to him and he asked me how I thought the debate went and the, the truth was that I was holding in my hand the Des Moines Register the headline of which was

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“Rough Night for Cruz.”

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: And so, he had not done well the night before although he would win the, the caucuses and so I kind of skirted that question. But, but like being at those debates, both the democratic and the republican debate, was just, like, I was just suddenly, you know, I, I write mostly from St. Louis and I’m covering all these people and then suddenly I’m in a room and they’re all right there and I’m seeing all, all these, all these fascinating people who I spent, spent so much time covering. And I think it’s, it’s really fascinating to be able to, you know, be right there and to be able to ask them your question and, and to be able to talk to these people running for high office. So, those, those were just kind of fascinating experiences with so many different really fun stories and, and, and experiences.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, and, you know, I’ll remind students and community members that we have those Delaware debates right here next Wednesday for the House and Senate and tickets are still available: delawaredebates.org. And, it’s a great opportunity for student media, high school, and college student media to come and try and interview some of the candidates or at least observe what the candidates are saying. So, I offer that opportunity to young journalists in the audience. So, let’s take another question from a community member. Carolyn, I see you in there. Can you toss that –

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] She has, always has lots of questions.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

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Q: It's my husband, it's fine.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

Q: First I'd like to applaud your parents. I think they're here.

What a wonderful job you've done at raising a responsible citizen.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

GABE FLEISHER: My grandparents are here too.

Q: And grandparents.

DR. HOFFMAN: Gabe's parents and Gabe's –

Q: Welcome to Delaware.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- parents and grandparents are here –

Q: [Indiscernible] to the First State.

DR. HOFFMAN: -- and maybe we can hear from them a little later.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

Q: Thank you for taking my question. Gabe, you're fantastic.

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

Q: I have a question for you. This is; how do you respond when people say to you, you're not really doing journalism because you are not operating in a journalistic system. You don't have an editor. I know Amelia talked about how you don't have a fact checker. You actually don't have an editor who is someone that's looking –

GABE FLEISHER: Um-hum.

Q: -- at stuff and really wordsmithing what you're doing and looking at the flow and like cutting off things. So, you have to edit yourself which is sort of like being your own movie director.

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GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

Q: You're always in the scene somehow. So, what's going on with that? How do you respond to that because of course you're not going to hire anybody, you're 16? But like what's going to happen?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, that's a really good, that's a good question. And, I do find, you know, I am kind of one-man operation like you said, and, and because of that sometimes, you know, I just kind of tie bows in the newsletter or things. I definitely often times I'll read the newsletter later in the day and, you know, while I really should have added more context there, or was that really necessary to put in, or I spelt (sic) that wrong and, and so where, you know, points where clearly an editor would be valuable but the reality is I kind of wake up and I write it and then I quick send and I leave for school so there's not really a lot of time for that.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: But, and, and so I do think, you know, if I were to continue the newsletter, you know, kind of after I get out of school it would be very cool to kind of have a bigger team of people and, and you know be able to, to edit my work. So, I, I, I get it, you know some people, people often times are very politely but kind of pointing out the different typos and things in my newsletter and um, but, but I, and then I, then I'll write back and say I'm so sorry, thank you so much for pointing this out. And then oftentimes people say that they appreciate actually because it, it kind of shows that it's pretty organic and that it's just me and that its kind of, kind of also shows that, that I, I am a little bit different than some other news outlets; that's it's a little less formal maybe or, or kind of, um,

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you know, I, I, I'm 16 and I think people get that. And so, I, I have time to kind of be more edited. But, um, but it's a good question. I, I don't think it distracts from my being a journalist or from the journalistic process, but I think more I would regard as, you know, kind of being my reporting the facts and kind of writing them. But, but, you're, your absolutely right that it's important to make sure that, that everything is edited. So, I try to, you know, look over it before I send it but it's hard to kind of check yourself in that way. So, it's something I'd like, I'd like to be able to grow with.

DR. HOFFMAN: How does a 16-year-old get interns?

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] That might be your next [indiscernible].

GABE FLEISHER: I guess.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right, let's take another question. There's one in the aisle here, Hannah. Right there, yeah.

Q: Hi. Thanks for coming tonight.

GABE FLEISHER: Thank you.

Q: So, from like a human services perspective, what or who has been your biggest support system and how have they guided you through this journey because obviously this couldn't have been easy.

GABE FLEISHER: I, I would definitely say my parents who deserved the round of applause that they got, and have always supported me –

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

GABE FLEISHER: -- and, and –

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

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GABE FLEISHER: Give them another hand.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

GABE FLEISHER: And have always really supported me and, and kind of guided me through the newsletter, they were my first readers. And my mom said they, they've, they, before I got my license which I now have drove me to those debates in Iowa and to other events and, you know, kind of sat as I was kind of doing my thing at, at different, at different events, and, have, have always given me a lot of advice in terms of, you know, what opportunities to take and, and what, what, you know, kind of making sure, you know, at the very beginning going very slowly and, you know, being very intentional about, about the newsletter and making sure it didn't get too overwhelming and, and, and making sure it grew at a, at a kind of an organic pace. And, and so they've always been, been there for me and, and been very helpful and supportive during this whole, whole thing.

DR. HOFFMAN: That's wonderful to hear. All right. Another question.

Hannah, can you go back in the middle here? And then maybe Parker you can go pick that one up from the other side. Thank you.

Q: Hi, Gabe.

GABE FLEISHER: Hi.

Q: Um, so I just wanted to know what a 16-year-old has planned for the future? Like if you've already had so much success, like what are your plans for college or, it sounds like you have an interview at the Post this Friday, so --

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

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AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: Um, yeah. I, I really love journalism and I love being able to inform people. It's a real honor to be able to do it. So, I really don't see myself, you know, stopping that. I don't really know yet. I, I have a lot of time to decide whether that'll be, you know, kind of continuing my newsletter which I would like to keep doing through high school and probably through college as much as I can. Or whether that would be joining kind of a bigger outlet if the Washington Post gives me an offer it would probably be hard to decline. But --

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: Um, but uh, so, I, you know, I don't really know yet where that will take me. I do think wherever I end up as an adult it will be certainly in politics, I think in journalism and, and other than that I'm kind of open to, to seeing, seeing where, where that takes me and, and, and seeing where it develops.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Gabe, or I'm sorry, Gabe. You're Gabe.

GABE FLEISHER: I'm Gabe.

DR. HOFFMAN: Parker, it looks like there's a question way back on the aisle there.

Q: Thanks for coming. And, I, I'm a subscriber. It's nice to see you in person.

GABE FLEISHER: Thank you.

Q: Tell me, you went from one to 50,000. How long did that take and how did you have that phenomenal growth in social media?

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, I mean, it took, it took seven years that I, I've been writing it. And so, it wasn't immediate. And I spent a lot of time writing for just a

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few subscribers and, and really for me the whole time I have not been focused on how many people are reading, but just making sure it's the best product that it could be for the amount of readers I have. But, but like I said, you know, a lot of the different kind of media outlets that, that I have been interviewed by kind of really have been instrumental in terms of that growth. Ah, the Post-Dispatch, when, when they profiled me that was kind of the first time.

DR. HOFFMAN: St. Louis.

GABE FLEISHER: The St. Louis Post Dispatch; our, our kind of, our hometown paper. When, and that was kind of the first time it went from people I knew or had some connection to, to suddenly kind of strangers reading the newsletter and it slowly, slowly, slowly and then when the New York – and that was in, that was actually Super Tuesday, 2012 –

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

GABE FLEISHER: -- in March 2012. And then, so that was in, and then five years later I was in the New York Times and, and I had about 2,000 subscribers which was awesome and to me was, I was amazed that 2,000 people were reading the newsletter. And then after the New York Times, and then a CNN interview about the New York Times interview and other, and Full Frontal, it went from 2,000 to like 40,000 in like two days. And so that was kind of the big leap when it was after that. And so, but, but it's, you know, I, that's never really been my focus and it's kind of I think I'm really proud of, I do ask every person who subscribes in the form it says how did you hear about *Wake Up to Politics*? And, and I, you know, I love kind of reading those responses and seeing, you know, my, my wife or my husband or my son or my daughter or my student or my teacher or you know all these different kinds of relationships and kinds of ways

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that people get to, get to the newsletter from people just forwarding it and saying, hey you should take a look at this. And so, it's kind of, its been incremental and slow but, but it's really exciting to watch and I, I, I'd write for as many people who would read it. I just, I, I, I don't think I could at this point kind of wake up and, and be reading the news and not be writing about it. It's kind of like I, I, I'm always thinking about how I'm going to be presenting the news that I'm reading. So, so I, I would write for any audience. But, but it's exciting to have a large one.

DR. HOFFMAN: A good, a good question –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: -- we had today though from one of the students was like, do you ever wake up and just like not –

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: -- feel like it?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] Like not feeling it at all.

GABE FLEISHER: And the answer was sometimes. When I wake up sometimes I'm very tired and, and my readers are always very understanding and flexible and from time to time I, I take a day off or something. But, but like I said before, I do really feel a real responsibility and I hear so much feedback from my readers of, of people who say, you know, it's the one thing they read about politics or they rely on it. And, and so knowing that so many people do rely on me to put this out and that if I, you know, sleep in one day it doesn't get sent. And then, you know, how ever many people might be that much less informed, you know, you know, because of that is, is, you know, weighs on me. And so, I have a lot of fun doing it. I really enjoy doing it but, but I also feel that sense of

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responsibility that, that kind of keeps me writing it each day. But, there, there are times when, when I have a lot going on and sometimes I might take a day off and people are pretty understanding.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.] I think so. All right. We've got a, maybe time for a couple of more question. Parker, there's one way over on the end there.

Q: Thanks for coming, Gabe.

GABE FLEISHER: Thank you.

Q: So, I –

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh, hi. Is that Justin?

Q: Uh, it's me, yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Hi.

Q: Hi.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

Q: [Laughter.] So, I also went to high school in Missouri.

GABE FLEISHER: I'm glad.

Q: Of course, I was in the, the, the best city, Kansas City. And best, most beautiful city.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

Q: Anyway, um, when I was in high school politics and political news was not cool.

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

Q: And, those of us who followed it, you know, kind of had to keep it hush hush.

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

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Q: And, I wonder how to make news more, especially political news, more cool, um, for the, for the younger generations. I wonder about YouTube and I wonder, well first of all, are you interested in becoming a content creator? Have you ever thought about it? But, second have you, what do you think of the content, the news content creators on YouTube like Philip DeFranco (phonetic spelling) and some of the others? What do you, what do you, do you follow them? Do your peers follow them?

GABE FLEISHER: I –

DR. HOFFMAN: So, it's like a two-point question. Yeah.

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, I'd say –

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

GABE FLEISHER: -- first of all, I mean, I think news is cool. I think it already is, so I don't think that needs to happen but –

DR. HOFFMAN: Hey, news is cool.

GABE FLEISHER: News is cool. Politics is cool and –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: -- and I, and I definitely have noticed a lot of, you know, especially since the 2016 election there's been this kind of surge of interest and, you know, I, I've been waiting. People are suddenly now people are paying attention and so it's fun to see that.

DR. HOFFMAN: You've been waiting since you were a kid, right?

GABE FLEISHER: Exactly, exactly; finally. Welcome to the party. But, I, yeah, I, I, I don't personally spend that much time getting news on YouTube, but I do

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know a lot of my friends that do. I know, I have friends who are subscribe to Philip DeFranco and other, um, sites like that. I think, like I said, it's about reaching young people where they are and where young people are is on YouTube, it's on Snapchat, its on Instagram and so, you know, watching those kind of as, both as kind of older legacy outlets have started going to those sites and then also as kind of organically, um, there, there, there's platforms that have, or there's, you know, or groups that have come, come from those platforms, you know, giving news. I, I do think that, that is a huge source of, of how a lot of young people are informed. Personally, I, YouTube hasn't really been something, or I've thought about [indiscernible] but I don't, I think I, I like to continue to, to writing and that, that seems to be kind of the media I, I like to go to. But, but I would for sure say that, that that's one way that, that a lot of people get their news and, and, and yeah, I think in terms of making politics cool it's, it's about, you know, if I think what's cool about the immediate climate we're in as you can be on YouTube and watch, you know, funny videos or whatever videos and then also right next to that on your subscription feed can be something about the news and you can be informed and then you can watch whatever. And it's the same on Twitter where you can, you know, follow news accounts and get your news but also, you know, your friends or whatever. So, it's, it's kind of a cool way how your politics is kind, or, you know, the news is, is kind of current events, you know, becoming more into people's daily lives and daily routines and, and um kind of merging with, with their, you know, other, other uses of social media.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. I think we have time for one more question?
Hannah, it looks like there's someone way over on that outside of the aisle there.

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Q: [Indiscernible.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

Q: Hi. Um, thank you for coming and one thing that I was curious about, I heard you say that you did sports and you hung out with friends. How in the name of God do you balance school, friends, sports, on top of all of this like at all? Because I know in high school I was not able to balance like myself –

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

Q: -- at all.

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, I mean, I think really just a little time management. It's like I, I think, it's hard for me to answer that. I kind of just, I, I just do, do what I do and, and, and I kind of, yeah, I, I like [indiscernible] I don't get all that much sleep. So, I do wake up pretty early to write the newsletter and, and it's really kind of just about having dedicated, like, time blocks, like, from 6:00 to 7:30 I'm writing *Wake Up to Politics* and there's really nothing else kind of permeating me. You know, I'm not really thinking about school or not anything else. You know, I'm just focused on writing the newsletter and getting it out. Then when I'm at school I'm focused on school; when I'm doing my homework, you know, at least I try to be, you know, as much as I can be focused on doing that. And then when I'm with my friends I'm not really thinking about politics or what's, you know, the news; I, I'm focused on that. And so, it's kind of just about dividing time, and, and not, you know, I don't think I, there's that much intersect, you know, kind of crossing over. It's kind of just me, you know, being focused on one thing and

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then on another. So, yeah, I, I don't get that much sleep I guess is, is part of it too. But, but it's, it, it could be difficult at times and it could be overwhelming to, to kind of balance be, being a journalist and writing the newsletter with, with everything that goes along with being a high school student. But, but I think I, I, I have the passion for it and it's something that I really love doing so I make time for it.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I think that's um really, it, what an inspiring talk I think in a time where people are so polarized and it's nice to be able to look at things from a non-polarized perspective. And, thank you Hannah and, and Parker for helping out with the Q and A. But –

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: I do have a, a few announcements about things that are going on here but before we thank Gabe for this great conversation, I'd like to ask one final question of him. Are you interested in becoming a Blue Hen at the –

GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: -- University of Delaware? [Laughter.]

GABE FLEISHER: I am, I certainly [indiscernible] on campus here and I, I have loved being able to be in Newark and to –

DR. HOFFMAN: Newark.

GABE FLEISHER: -- to look –

DR. HOFFMAN: Listen to that?

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah, I picked that up. And, and, and everyone here has

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been so nice and so I, I, I'd love –

DR. HOFFMAN: No pressure, no pressure.

GABE FLEISHER: No, I; it's, its [indiscernible].

DR. HOFFMAN: But, yeah, we're really appreciative to have you here. Um, I do want to have a couple final points here. We should have, if I'm not mistaken, some folks out in the lobby. I'm really excited, you guys might have seen this in, on WHYY this morning, a news story released the student-led Make it Count campaign to engage students through Turbo-vote has signed up nearly 1,100 students –

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: -- since the start of the semester.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: And that's more than half way to our goal, the student run, run group goal of 2,000 this academic year. So, we're very excited. Moreover, UD has been recognized with a top score in a new first of its kind ranking of colleges by how they engage students in voting and out of nearly 1,500 colleges in the country only 58 received a top score, the UD was one of them. So, find out more about registration and voting at cpc.udel.edu/makeitcount. Delaware's deadline for registration is October 13th if you are a resident of Delaware. Find out more at those, at that website. We also have, if you are looking to get involved, a living room conversation. This is a web-based platform that provides information for how to engage in civil dialogue. So, we're doing this on, let me look, October 25th in Trabant Theater. I will be joined by a representative from the college republicans, college democrats, an independent student as well as a representative from the Make it Count campaign. And we're going to be talking

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about why you should vote or not vote. What does it mean to vote? So, I'm hoping that this serves as an example for students to engage in their own living room conversations which may be in their dorm rooms or in their common rooms or elsewhere, that there are ways to engage in civil dialogue that are really effective even if we have disagreements on particular things. Um. So, I mentioned the Voices competition. This is a great audio essay contest that University of Delaware students can submit audio essays to. There are cash prizes. Last year we had some incredible entries and we had a, an award ceremony with a keynote speaker by Sarah McBride who is a Delawarean and one of the first, actually the first transgender person to speak at a national convention. I don't know if you know who Sarah is?

GABE FLEISHER: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, so we have that deadline is, it's up there somewhere. November 30th. Thank you. So that's coming up. Ah, and then of course we have the Delaware Debates. These are two separate debates this year for those of you have, who have come to debates in the past, we kind of put them all together in, in the past. Now they're two separate debates and you need tickets for each one. Two tickets are available for person, per person. So that's at delawaredebates.org. And, next speaker in our National Agenda Speaker Series is Amberia Allen. She is a standup comedian, a PhD candidate, as well as a writer for the Daily Show with Trevor Noah. So that should be a very interesting conversation. And, is that all I have here? Let me – is that it? Okay. [Laughter.] Smile less. So, what I wanted to end with was just to let you know that this conversation because we're cool, and the news is cool and we're like on the YouTube's and things –

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GABE FLEISHER: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: -- we will have this conversation on YouTube as well as a podcast if you look up on wherever you get your podcasts look for National Agenda from the University of Delaware. And again, I just want to give Gabe and his, his family a big round of applause for being here.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: And I want to thank you all for being here and I hope to see you again next time. Thank you.

GABE FLEISHER: Thank you.

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