

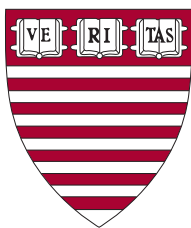
THEODORE H. WHITE LECTURE ON PRESS AND POLITICS

WITH

RACHEL MADDOW

Joan Shorenstein Center

PRESS ▪ POLITICS



▪ PUBLIC POLICY ▪

Harvard University
John F. Kennedy School of Government

2010

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The Theodore H. White Lecture commemorates the life of the reporter and historian who created the style and set the standard for contemporary political journalism and campaign coverage.

White, who began his journalism career delivering the *Boston Post*, entered Harvard College in 1932 on a newsboy's scholarship. He studied Chinese history and oriental languages. In

1939 he witnessed the bombing of Chungking while freelance reporting on a Sheldon Fellowship.

In 1959 White sought support for a 20-year research project, a retrospective of presidential campaigns. After being advised by fellow reporters to drop this academic exercise, White took to the campaign trail, and, relegated to the "zoo plane," changed the course of American political journalism with the publication of *The Making of a President*, in 1960. The 1964, 1968, and 1972 editions of *The Making of a President*, along with *America in Search of Itself*, remain vital documents to the study of campaigns and the press.

Before his death in 1986, White also served on the Visiting Committee here at the Kennedy School of Government; he was one of the architects of what has become the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy.

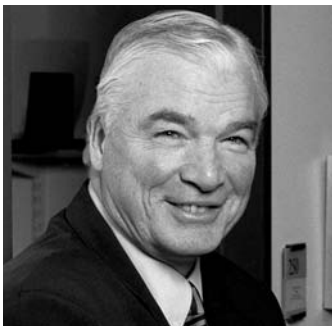


Rachel Maddow is the host of *The Rachel Maddow Show* on MSNBC-TV. In 2005, she was a regular contributor to *The Situation with Tucker Carlson* and *Race for the White House with David Gregory*. She was a frequent guest and sometime guest host on *Countdown* with Keith Olbermann, before taking the helm of her own show in September of 2008. She was on the air with Air America Radio from 2004 until 2010. She was a co-host on WRNX radio in Holyoke and WRSI in Northhampton, Massachusetts. Maddow received a degree in public policy from Stanford University in 1994, was a Rhodes Scholar, and earned a D.Phil. in politics from Oxford University.



William Greider is national affairs correspondent for *The Nation*. Previously, he wrote a regular political column for *Rolling Stone* magazine and served as on-air correspondent for six documentary films for PBS's *Frontline*. In the early part of his career, he was on the national staff of *The Washington Post*. Beginning in 1968, he was a *Post* correspondent, then became assistant managing editor for national coverage, edited the Outlook section, and wrote a weekly column. In 1981, he wrote an

influential account of the Reagan administration, "The Education of David Stockman," which was published in the *Atlantic Monthly*. He is the author of several books including *Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country* (1987), *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (1997), and *Come Home, America* (2009).



David Nyhan was a columnist and reporter at *The Boston Globe* for 30 years. A graduate of Harvard College and a Shorenstein Fellow in the spring of 2001, Nyhan was a regular participant in Shorenstein Center activities before, during and after his Fellowship. Nyhan died unexpectedly in 2005. In his eulogy Senator Edward Kennedy said of Nyhan, "Dave was a man of amazing talent, but most of all he was a man of the people

who never forgot his roots....In so many ways, but especially in the daily example of his own extraordinary life, Dave was the conscience of his community." The hallmark of David Nyhan's brand of journalism was the courage to champion unpopular causes and challenge the powerful with relentless reporting and brave eloquence. In his memory, the Shorenstein Center established the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism.

THE THEODORE H. WHITE LECTURE

NOVEMBER 14, 2010

Mr. Ellwood: Good evening, everyone. My name is David Ellwood. I am the dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government here at Harvard University. It is my special pleasure to welcome you to the Theodore H. White Lecture on Press and Politics, sponsored by the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy.

Truly this is one of the great nights of the year. And the fact that we have such an amazing audience on a cool Sunday evening is a testament both to the significance of the event but also of course to the remarkable people that we will be listening to and honoring tonight.

I want to say just a couple of words quickly. First of all, we lost Walter Shorenstein this year and Walter was one of the really great human beings, one of the great figures of American politics, someone who cared very, very deeply about issues of transparency and accountability, but also progressive values of a very significant sort in many other great issues. One of his great legacies has been the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy.

The Center is named in honor of his daughter, who passed away and who was a remarkable journalist. So it is altogether wonderful and fitting that on this evening we have such a spectacular program. He was a terrific man. Now Doug and Carole are here, both Shorensteins. (Applause)

And I would be remiss if I didn't ask you all to give a big round of applause to Walter Shorenstein. (Applause)

And Carole, you are here with your husband Jeff and your daughter, Gracie, so welcome to all of you. We are really glad to have you. I will not spend any more time up on the stage other than to introduce very briefly Alex Jones, another remarkable human being who was a terrific, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who has covered the media and many other kinds of activities. He worked for *The New York Times*, wrote a book about *The New York Times*, has done a magnificent job running the Shorenstein Center. So without further ado, let me turn it over to Alex Jones. (Applause)

Mr. Jones: Thank you. And thank you, David. Thank all of you for being here. Each year this night is one of celebration for the Shorenstein Center. Tonight is a celebration but it is one that is bittersweet. As some of you already know, the Shorenstein Center was founded in 1986 as a memorial, as David said, to Joan Shorenstein Barone, a truly remarkable television journalist who died of breast cancer after a distinguished journalistic career at CBS.

Her father, Walter Shorenstein, endowed the Center as a place for focused and searching examination of the intersection of the press, politics and public policy. Walter Shorenstein not only made the Center possible, but remained vitally interested in what we do and was our unstinting supporter and friend. As you have heard from David, in June after a long and extraordinary life, Walter Shorenstein died at 95.

I would like to begin tonight's celebration by paying tribute to the man who made it possible. Walter was indeed an extraordinary man. As a young man he found himself after World War II with an honorable discharge from the Army and a couple of thousand dollars and decided to make his life in San Francisco. His first great achievement was using his brains and character, and it took both, brains and character, to turn his small estate into one of the nation's greatest commercial real estate empires.

Those who knew Walter, and I consider it my privilege to be among them, know that he loved to tell stories about his often rocky rise in the cutthroat world of commercial real estate. Walter's secret was not just that he often saw opportunities that others did not see, but that he took pains to make sure that those doing business with him always got their money's worth. He took pains to understand his buildings from the inside out and from the bottom up, the janitors and the elevator operators and the people who kept the heating system working knew him and he knew them.

Needless to say, he was a stunning business success. But the thing that made Walter Shorenstein a great man was that he was also a great citizen of this country. He cared about what was happening and then used his wealth to try to do something about it. He was one of the wise men of the Democratic Party, not merely a man who wrote checks, though he did that, too. He was listened to and he had genuine wisdom to impart.

He looked over the horizon with a kind of prescience that is rare. And right up to the last days of his life he was engaged in the world's affairs. I'm proud to say that at his memorial service in San Francisco his son, Doug Shorenstein, who is here, said that the two achievements that made his father proudest were his family and the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School.

He was our goad and our great friend, our benefactor and our visionary ally. I could say quite frankly that he inspired us. We should all live the life of Walter Shorenstein. The Kennedy School is a place built for people who come here to learn how they can change the world. That is why the Shorenstein Center belongs here and why it is so fitting that it should be so big a part of Walter Shorenstein's enduring legacy. We miss him very much.

I am very glad to say that the gauntlet has been passed. With us tonight, as David said, are Walter's son Doug, his daughter Carole Sho-

renstein Hays and Carole's husband Jeff, their daughter Gracie, and I hope that we are going to be joined later by Wally who missed his train. Also here is Walter's great niece, Marissa Shorenstein. I would ask all the members of the Shorenstein family please to stand while we pay tribute to Walter Shorenstein and to his remarkable family. (Applause)

A bit later you will hear from our Theodore White lecturer for 2010, Rachel Maddow. But first I have another task to perform, which is an honor. In 2005 we at the Shorenstein Center lost another much admired friend, David Nyhan, when he died unexpectedly. Some of you did not know David and I want to speak of him briefly as we this year bestow the sixth annual David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism.

David Nyhan was a man of many parts, a devoted family man, a loyal pal and the best company in the world. He was a real Boston guy, a big handsome man with a mischievous smile, sparkly eyes and the rare power to raise everyone's spirits and make it seem like a party just by walking into the room. I saw him do it again and again during the time he was a Fellow at the Shorenstein Center.

But tonight we honor David Nyhan, the consummate reporter and political journalist, which is the role that occupied much of his life and at which he could not be bested. David was a reporter and then a columnist at *The Boston Globe* and his work had both a theme and character. The theme was almost always power, political power. And also especially the abuse of political power by the big shots at the expense of the little guys.

He also loved politicians. As a group, he respected them. He felt they were often given a raw deal and judged by a standard that was smug and sanctimonious, two things David never was. He was a self-evolved liberal and not defensive about it. Were he with us today he would relish the coming battle for the White House and would have savored the fact that Massachusetts bucked the national trend and stayed firmly Democratic in the congressional elections. (Applause and Laughter)

And he would have had some fun with Sarah Palin. But he would not have been predictable. He was always surprising his readers with his takes on things because most of all David Nyhan was his own man and he called them as he saw them. In his memory and honor the Nyhan family and many friends and admirers of David Nyhan have endowed the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism to recognize the kind of gutsy, stylish and relentless journalism that David Nyhan embodied.

David's wife, Olivia, is with us tonight as are his children, Veronica, Kate and Nick and other members of the Nyhan family and I would like to ask them to all please stand. (Applause)

This year's Nyhan Prize winner is William Greider who comes very much out of the David Nyhan tradition of a life devoted to political jour-

nalism, in his case from an economics perspective. There are two things that you should know about Bill Greider that may give you a sense of him as a person and as a pundit. The first is that on his personal website he has included a picture of himself nestled in the list of best-selling book titles he has written on economics, power and politics. It's a close-up headshot of him with a red ball on his nose, the kind that clowns wear.

He is also a man who wrote a book in 1997 on globalization called *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* that was criticized by the eminent economist, Paul Krugman, in the kind of take-no-prisoners way Krugman has when he disagrees. Greider has since had the rare and no doubt savory experience in his 2009 book, *Come Home America: The Rise and Fall (and Redeeming Promise) of Our Country*, of saying in that book that Krugman in his wisdom has come closer to Greider's views, a very gentle way of saying I was right, you were wrong.

William Greider has strong views. And he has been expressing them journalistically for 40 years. After Princeton and the Army he worked at several small and regional newspapers. From there he became a member of the national staff of *The Washington Post* for a dozen years and eventually became the assistant managing editor and director of all their national coverage. He also edited Outlook, the *Post's* Sunday opinion section and wrote a weekly column called, most appropriately, "Against the Grain."

But then he did something that I think was not entirely unlike his decision to post a picture of himself with a clown's nose on his website. He left *The Post*. For the next 17 years, he was a regular political columnist for *Rolling Stone* magazine. He said that he made the surprising move because he wanted to develop his own critical perspective. "I learned how to explain the complexities of politics and government with clarity and without the condescension that is typical of the mainstream media," he said. "Newspapers talk down to average readers without knowing it. They do not respect the intelligence of ordinary citizens or explain the deeper context of power politics in ways people can understand. I made a personal commitment to do that for them in *Rolling Stone* and my books."

His books have been both successful and influential and always revealing and penetrating. His first big splash was "The Education of David Stockman" which began as a series of articles in *The Atlantic Monthly* and was focused on the fallacies and contradictions of Reaganomics in intimate detail. There followed many others, among them the ones I have named. Perhaps his most powerful and far-reaching book was *Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country*, which was published nearly 25 years ago. It won the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award and is still in print and certainly the role of the Federal Reserve has never been more salient to our national conversation.

Despite his critical perspective, Bill Greider has also maintained an endearing optimism, something very much in the David Nyhan tradition. It isn't a Panglossian optimism, but it seems to be a faith that the ordinary Americans for whom he writes and battles still have the capacity to make ours a better country if only they will step up and reclaim their role as citizens in the full meaning of the word.

It is for his constant encouragement of that end that we have named him the 2010 winner of the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism, Bill Greider. (Applause)

Mr. Greider: Thank you. That feels good, you did a pretty good biography for me. You left out some dark moments there but it was good. I am just going to start with an awkward admission, but I think Alex has maybe already explained it. But when word got around *The Nation* that I was going to win a prize from Harvard, some of my younger colleagues began muttering, has Greider sold out? (Laughter)

And you understand, in some sectors of the society Larry Summers stands for Harvard. I know that is terribly unfair, but you just can't help it. And I had just written a few weeks before a rather intemperate blog on Larry Summers titled "Professor Pants on Fire." I just enjoyed writing that piece. (Laughter)

And I have known Professor Summers a little bit for many years and we have had our moments before. But here was the cutting of cord, our friendship was over after that blog.

I didn't know David Nyhan well. We crossed paths on campaign trails. And I think, I hope he knew, we were kindred spirits because I would read him and understand that we had a very similar understanding of America and what matters.

I did know Joan Shorenstein much better. She was a young researcher, I think for David Broder, when I was a young reporter in the newsroom. She was younger than me. And she was, as people know and have said, a beautiful person, smart, full of integrity, generous of spirit. So between those two I feel honored, deeply honored and flattered to be associated with those names. Then I Googled some of the previous winners of this award and I thought, boy, I am really in good company.

Having been at the A ring of Washington politics at *The Post* at a very exciting time, '60's and '70's, and getting to understand things pretty well in Washington, I came away with a feeling of the divide between governing elites and people at large. And that is not a partisan or ideological statement. It's just the way things were. That was the theme of the book I wrote nearly 20 years ago called *Who Will Tell the People*. And it was not well received in the marble city I have to say. But it has held up as a thesis pretty starkly over the years.

Just to be provocative I will put in a good word for the Tea Party crowd. They said a lot of stupid, fantastically, cockamamie and ugly things, but they got one thing right which was their anger at the governing elites. And they were, under the circumstances, reasonably bipartisan about that. As you know they took down as many Republicans as they did Democrats.

It's not just the deficits, it's not just trade system, it's not just wars. It's all those things along with some other equally large forces bearing down on our country. We have a rough, rough time ahead and it is not going to be over in the next election or the election after that. It is going to go on for a generation. And my cockeyed thesis was that we will come out on the other side of that if, if, if we attend as a better place, way better than what we are now or what we have been.

Because I am talking to Harvard collectively and I hope in a friendly way, you really need to attend to what the Tea Party folks were saying. I promise you, you can go into the ranks of organized labor, not just labor leaders, but in any workplace you will hear the same thing. You can go into the middle management of major corporations where I did a good deal of my reporting on the global economy and you will hear, said a little differently, but basically the same thing. This is a great rupture and nobody has to blame anybody for it. It developed over 30 or 40 years, the collapse of the political parties.

Listen earnestly to what folks are saying and don't be misled by their occasional rants. I'll give you one example, the issue of social security. It is not a mistake that social security is the most popular engine of the federal government, I mean universally beloved. And yet we are now looking at a discussion of near unanimity among governing elites, I mean the think tanks, both of the political parties, all of the right economists, etcetera, etcetera, that, well, we have to whack social security.

And I am going to use harsh language because that's what they have in mind. I am a careful newspaper reader of at least three of our best newspapers every day, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*. I will say to you I have yet to read an honest story in any of those newspapers about the condition of social security. Reporters and editors reflexively assume that what the responsables are saying is correct, that social security is just spinning out of control or is a burden that drives our deficits, etcetera.

If they did a little reporting independent of what the responsables have told them they would discover, first of all, that social security has not contributed a dime to the federal deficits. Quite the contrary. For 30 years, 25 years, social security has built up huge surpluses because all working people were paying in a higher FICA tax and money went to the social security trust fund.

It is now around two-and-a-half trillion dollars. According to the actuaries it is going to rise to about four trillion dollars. What happened to that money is that the federal government, separate from the social security trust fund, borrowed that money and spent it. They spent it partly on the regressive tax cuts which the Reagan years passed, on a couple of wars, on all sorts of other trinkets that the Pentagon managed to construct, on and on.

Now we are approaching the moment, few years hence, where the federal government has to pay that money back. That's the crisis of social security. And I promise you every economist, every policy maker who is waving the red bloody shirt about social security knows those facts. I don't know whether the reporters know them or not. They ought to. But you see what I am driving at. They are lumping social security together with Medicare, which does indeed have big fiscal problems, and the rest of government and they want the folks who paid in that money to pay for the loss of government revenues caused by whom? By the same people who drove globalization to its present state of imbalance, but also the bankers who led the country to ruin in this decade.

I'll stop. I think I've made my point. This is not secret stuff. It's just what people ought to know before they make up their minds. And I will end finally just to say thank you again. I have enormous confidence and I've learned it not from Princeton, where I spent a glorious four years, Joe Nye remembers me as a classmate, but I learned it as a reporter. And that's why I am an optimist, because I know folks and I have a lot of faith that they will get there. Thank you. (Applause)

Mr. Jones: Theodore H. White was also a consummate reporter whose passion was politics. He came to Harvard on a newsboy scholarship and went on to a very distinguished career as a journalist and also a historian. Indeed, Teddy White, as he was universally known, changed both political journalism and politics when he wrote *The Making of the President 1960* about the Kennedy-Nixon campaign. For the first time he raised the curtain on the warts and all sides of presidential campaigns and changed forever the candor and behind-the-scenes drama that is now the heart of campaign coverage.

He followed that first book with three more *Making of the Presidents* books in 1964, '68 and '72. No one has yet surpassed those smart and ground-breaking examinations of what happens and why in the maelstrom of a political campaign. And it is fair to say that Teddy White's heirs are the journalists of today who try to pierce the veil of politics, to understand what is happening and then analyze and deliver the goods to those of us who are trying to understand.

Before his death in 1986 Teddy White was one of the architects of what became the Shorenstein Center. One of the first moves of Marvin Kalb, the Center's founding director, was to raise the funds and establish the Theodore H. White Lecture on the Press and Politics in his honor. This year the White Lecture is to be delivered by Rachel Maddow, the shy, — (Laughter) — reticent, utterly non-combative host of MSNBC's *The Rachel Maddow Show*. She is widely regarded to be the most incisive, the most intellectually nimble, the wittiest and also the most genuinely thoughtful person on cable news. I'm not sure Sean Hannity or Glenn Beck or Rush Limbaugh feel that way, but if your politics tend to be Democratic and you would like to see a really smart person going toe to toe with the Fox News team, then Rachel Maddow is apt to be a hero to you.

Some of you may have seen her recent interview of Jon Stewart in which Stewart called her out for MSNBC's role in fostering political polarization. She listened. She didn't necessarily agree, but she listened. That is part of her strength. She listens, thinks and reacts. All apparently in a flash. Tonight we have invited her to reflect and I very much look forward to what she has to say.

So who is Rachel Maddow? She is a woman who at 17 came out as a lesbian by posting notes announcing it in all the bathroom stalls of her school before telling her parents. (Laughter)

She has described herself as a big lesbian who, she says, looks like a dude. She has said that even as a young girl with long blonde hair she looked like a young boy with long blonde hair. The point is she seems utterly comfortable with who she is. And that has given her a solid, powerful foundation from which to speak her mind.

She began doing that as a radio talk show host, worked for Air America, the liberal talk radio network. Then she started filling in for Keith Olbermann on MSNBC. He is the other powerful liberal voice there. The chemistry that television sometimes allows happened. She connected with her audience and her audience connected with her profoundly. She is a Californian, a graduate of Stanford, a Rhodes Scholar and now divides her time between New York and Northampton, Massachusetts.

She actually came to Western Massachusetts to finish her dissertation because, her words, "I wanted to move somewhere where I would be unhappy. I have no interest in New England, hate winter, don't like the country, not fond of animals." Rachel Maddow. She is equally unexpectedly or expectedly direct in her commentary, interviews and reporting. People describe her using words such as fearless and hypnotic. They talk about her flashing eyes. And she has attracted a host of fans, straight and

gay, whose online posts have title lines such as, “We’re gay for Rachel Maddow.” (Laughter)

Most recently she has hurled herself into the fire fight over whether Keith Olbermann, her colleague and friend, should have been suspended for making a donation to Democratic candidates, which is against NBC’s rules. She took the position that MSNBC’s suspension of Olbermann was a demonstration that MSNBC was a news channel, rather than a political vehicle for the Republican Party, like Fox News. She is an avowed liberal, but not a party apologist. She bolsters her argument by saying that she frequently criticizes Democrats, and President Obama has certainly come in for some sharp Maddow analysis.

She is, in other words, her own very strong political voice, one intended to serve the things she loves, like her country and the Constitution. She thinks of herself as an observer, a passionate observer with a point of view, but also with intellectual honesty. Massachusetts’ surprise Republican Senator Scott Brown paid her the dubious compliment of raising money by claiming she planned to run against him in 2012. She said it was not true. He kept making the claim and raising money with it. She responded by buying a full page ad in *The Boston Globe* confirming that she was not going to be a candidate and demanding an apology.

She also observed that Senator Brown has declined repeated invitations to come on her show. I suspect we all know why. It is my honor to present the Theodore H. White Lecturer for 2010, Rachel Maddow. (Applause)

Ms. Maddow: Wow. It’s very humbling to be here and that was a very, very kind introduction, so thank you. I do not think of myself as the kind of person who wins awards like this or who is invited to places like this or who gets you all to come out on a night like this when the Patriots are about to kick off. So thank you for this honor. I also want to say thank you on behalf of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America who are receiving my honorarium for this award tonight. (Applause)

Last year in what I believe was the 20th annual Theodore H. White Lecture here at Harvard, your honoree Taylor Branch started his address with a received problem, a problem he described as the slow evaporation of mainstream journalism in our era. And his lecture asked whether journalism’s self-evident death was rather more inglorious than it needed to be because journalism hadn’t just become unsustainable from a business perspective, journalism had become bad on its own terms.

It’s an uncomfortable question and a bold one and a brave one to ask here. In addition to that being an uncomfortable question, it is also an uncomfortable reality that the loss of reporting jobs, the slashing of news-

room resources, the financial apocalypse among newspapers and print magazines is almost totally unlamented beyond those of us who are in

...it is also an uncomfortable reality that the loss of reporting jobs, the slashing of newsroom resources, the financial apocalypse among newspapers and print magazines is almost totally unlamented beyond those of us who are in this profession.

this profession. Maybe it also includes those of us who feel romantic about this profession, but beyond us mugs nobody really cares.

The country hates the press. Among objective reporters and anchors, even the most intrepid and accomplished are now derided for having a secret agenda, for having an axe to grind, for having some veiled bias that is transparent only to those who do not share it. Politically neutral reporters are disparaged as the “lamestream media,” right? The “lamestream media,” which is this year’s politically fashionable school-yardy update of just calling media liberal.

Among those of us who are not political conscientious objectors, among those of us who do not hide or disown our points of view, undoubtedly we are considered heroes by some people who agree with us and villains by some who disagree. But to the larger group, or maybe to the commentariat that considers itself to be above political inclinations of their own, people who claim to agree with us only when we are right and to disagree with us only when we are wrong, to that group our very existence, my very existence, is scorned as evidence of the guttural malignancy of America’s anti culture.

This country hates the press. Not just some of it, all of it. All the lawyer jokes you could tell in the ‘80’s, you can now make them into TV anchor jokes. When *The New York Times* published an account of the National Security Agency’s unprecedented spying on

The country hates the press.

Americans without our knowledge or without our assent, claims by the Right, or some on the right, that the paper’s editor should be killed for the transgression of publishing that story were

greeted with a kind of mild eyebrow raising that we usually save for angry emails that lapse into all capital letters, or misfired tweets.

As someone who speaks overtly from the Left to an audience that is not entirely of the Left but which expects to hear liberal opinion from me,

the closest thing I know of as a way to goose my own ratings is to showcase some villainous behavior from a media figure on the right. I am not particularly interested in conservative media so this doesn't happen very often, but when bad behavior happens by a host on the Fox News Channel or someone who is well known in conservative talk radio, when that story is newsworthy enough in my estimation to make our show, our viewers lock in and our ratings go up.

Am I particularly entertaining or incisive when I am talking about Fox News? Do I get better looking, do our sad little graphics packages get any more tidy? No, they do not. The numbers rise then because there is an appetite for hearing that media figures on the right are terrible people doing terrible things: *here is the terribleness*. That same appetite is evident on the other side, and I have the inches-thick pile of threats to prove it. Threats surge not when my show reports or makes big news about some politician or even when I cover violent extremism, which I

do pretty often and in some tedious detail. Threats surge and hate mail and all the rest when media figures on the right single me out for being, wait for it, *a terrible person doing terrible things, here is the terribleness, the terribleness of me*.

Politics has always been entertaining, but the pure entertainment value was always mucked up a little bit by the actual work of governing. Elections are definitely fun, but it is harder to get your blood lust, Punch and Judy on for whether or not the state of New Jersey really is going to pay its share of the cost for that new tunnel into Manhattan.

We have created a system in the media in which the pure malevolent glee and demonization and dirty tricks and kinetic heat of the horrible last days of particularly brutal elections can happen all year round now. And we the players, we the combatants, unlike real politicians who win real political battles, we do not muck up the fun of this vainglorious combat by actually taking the job, by taking responsibility for governing, for policy, for law, for our country's standing in the world.

It used to be that it was hard to get a mortgage, right? The bank was giving you a huge loan and the bank made it hard to prove to them that

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you would pay it back. Because if you didn't pay it back it was that bank that was lending you the money that was going to be left in the lurch. So you represent a risk to the bank, they make sure that risk is as small and manageable as possible before they lend you money to buy the house. That

We made a market in mortgages that had nothing to do with houses. We have also made a market in electioneering that has nothing to do with taking office. We have decoupled the process from the responsibility. And we are making a killing doing it.

was the system. Getting a mortgage was a total pain.

Then we developed this genius system in which a bank would issue you a loan to buy a house but then they would sell that loan to somebody else. So what does that do to all the incentives? Now you no longer represent a risk to the bank that is approving you for this loan. They will make you a loan, sure, just sign here, here's a coffee mug. If you never pay it back, who cares, not their problem, you are not a risk to them because they sold your loan and the risk that you would never pay it back downstream somewhere. We made a market in mortgages that had nothing to do with houses.

We have also made a market in electioneering that has nothing to do with taking office. We have decoupled the process from the responsibility. And we are making a killing doing it. Opinion-driven media makes the money that politically neutral media loses. Now, lament, lament, gnashing of teeth, rending of garments. If you are either in the old media or if you are somebody who feels very soft-focusy about the old media, go for it.

Opinion-driven media makes the money that politically neutral media loses.

That is definitely one way to see it and I understand the consternation. The other way to see it though is, hey, wow, somebody is making a ton of money in the news. Sustainable business plan? More like a gold mine. And that can, in a way, be seen as great for the news business if you believe that what is proving profit-

able now is actually the news business. If you believe that you can see journalism from my proverbial house. (Laughter)

Can you hear election results from someone you know thinks one side has mostly bad ideas and the other side has mostly good ideas? Can you hear about the bizarre Rube Goldberg politics of trying to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell from someone who has made pretty clear that they think Don't

Ask, Don't Tell is a failed policy? Can you hear about controversial past statements of someone hired by the Obama administration from someone who is clearly looking to create political problems for the Obama administration because they do not like that administration? Can you hear about a politician deriding the other side as the party of food stamps from an anchor who references as part of his report the fact that he was raised on food stamps? Can you hear about our country from people who are actually recognizable as part of our country? Can you hear the news from a particular voice, from a particular whole three-dimensional person? Can you hear me now?

I understand that there is consternation about the particularness of the people from whom Americans are getting their news now; about our identifiable opinions or identifiable points of view or specific backgrounds. But do you believe us?

We may not ever have one voice of authority for the whole country again. And as somebody who never really felt that voice spoke for me anyway, frankly, I do not share the nostalgia. But just because the voice of God, mainstream by force, single authority media is not coming back does not mean that authority itself is lost. Telling the truth, bringing to light reportable facts, explaining reportable facts and putting them in accurate context, that is the nuts and bolts every day, same as it ever was. And it is the basis on which I believe everybody in this business should be judged. It is not, however, the basis on which we will succeed or fail commercially.

What is working commercially is political conflict. As a person who is not much of a screamer I can see the hamster wheels of that at work when some mild disagreement I have had, some exchange of differing points of view, no matter how polite, is marketed online as an epic clash, a smack down. For websites seeking video clicks, after the jump, the epic clash. It is the exclamation points that sell, right? As it always has been and it always shall be. Maybe it is websites now but it was broadsides before.

Lamenting blood lust, lamenting prurience has always been a rather predictable and rather pointless American pastime. Ultimate fighting will render boxing quaint. (Pacquiao versus Margarito last night notwithstanding.) Teenagers will shock adults with their behavior at school dances. No matter how much they insist that they are on their own moral high ground of their own graphics department's making, CNN is just not going to out-

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rate Fox. Ted Koppel is never going to get to be Walter Cronkite. Nobody is going to get to be Walter Cronkite. If you want to change what works, you

If you want to change what works, you need more than just lamenting what is not going to happen again. You need to come up with something that works better.

need more than just lamenting what is not going to happen again. You need to come up with something that works better.

The media in my view is going to be fine. Journalism is going to be fine. The news is going to be fine. The problem in turning politics into profitable and high-profile TV news right now is not what it does to TV, not what it does to journalism, not what it does to news, it is what it does to politics. When we made a market for mortgages that had nothing

to do with houses the result was not good for houses. The result was not good for the baseline American need to keep people in houses. When we made a market for electioneering that had nothing to do with taking office, the thing to worry about that is taking office.

The thing to worry about, because of that decision we have made, is what it does to governing. There is a reason people in opinion driven news flirt with running for office. It gives you a ratings spike. Duh. (Laughter) There is a reason though that people flirt with it but don't do it. There is a reason why the version of electioneering done for TV purposes, in my view, should be divorced from actual fund-raising and political donations. It is not to protect us. We are not fragile. It is to protect politics.

The problem in turning politics into profitable and high-profile TV news right now is not what it does to TV, not what it does to journalism, not what it does to news, it is what it does to politics.

There are advantages to the many-voices-of-authority model that we've got now in American news. It means that one super-elite guy (it's always a guy), one super-elite guy's voice is not always the biggest or most important voice anymore.

It means that the habitual suck up to power and the trading of corrupt discretion for access to those in power has been, or at least is starting to be, replaced by a much more contrary or at least diverse ethos. It means that news does not have to shiver under the threat

of financial unsustainability like it did in those days everybody feels so nostalgic for, when network newscasts lost bucketloads of money and that

was something to be proud of. There are some advantages to the way that things are now.

The threat though is that people in politics decide to drop governing, to drop governing, to instead build their influence as if they are media figures only. Since the midterm elections, both Senator Jim DeMint of South Carolina and former House Majority Leader (and now goat farmer) Dick Armey have advised newly elected conservative members of Congress and the Senate to avoid committees. They didn't say it together, these were two separate speeches. They are advising newly elected conservative members of Congress and the Senate to avoid seeking good positions on congressional committees. Both men arguing that committee assignments are used as plums by the parties, as leverage to get members to go along with legislation those members might not otherwise vote for. Jim DeMint and Dick Armey say don't fall for it. Committees also happen to be where Congress does its work. It is where Congress does all the work that they do, you know, making law and stuff. (Laughter)

If newly elected members of Congress are supposed to avoid committee assignments, what exactly are they supposed to be doing with their new-found jobs as legislators? The implicit message is that they are supposed to keep politicking. They are supposed to keep talking, keep fighting, keep sharpening the differences, keep drawing lines in the sand. I mean, let's face it, keep going on TV and talking smack. That's the worry.

I know everybody is sad that they are not going to be Walter Cronkite. But the real worry is not that newsmen don't get to grow up to have no competition anymore. The real worry is that losing vice presidential candidates quit their half-finished governor's jobs for television gigs as some approximation of becoming the press before they run for president. Nothing that happens on TV builds that tunnel that we need from New Jersey to Manhattan. Nothing that happens on TV runs the country or regulates factory farms

The real worry is that losing vice presidential candidates quit their half-finished governor's jobs for television gigs as some approximation of becoming the press before they run for president.

Nothing that happens on TV runs the country or regulates factory farms or gets real about social security or exalts our country's place among the nations.

or gets real about social security or exalts our country's place among the nations.

The press may now approximate what it is to run for office, but we approximate very, very poorly what it is to hold office. The conflation of those two things is good for TV. It is not necessarily bad for journalism, although I look forward to fighting with you about that in the Q and A. But I do think it's bad for governance. Whether or not you believe that the mainstream press is slowly evaporating probably depends on how you feel about the word *mainstream*. It may also depend on whether or not you used to have a job in the old media and whether or not that job still exists.

Lamenting changes in the media is a little bit like lamenting changes in kids these days and that horrible modern music. The complaint is not much different than it was in the 1950's and the pace of change is not much affected by the lamentation. Missing the unsustainable things that we feel

...the press did not disappear. The press did not evaporate. The press changed. And it is still changing.

moony about in journalism but we've lost at this point is academic. Bad setting to make that claim, I know. (Laughter) But frankly the press did not disappear. The press did not evaporate. The press changed. And it is still changing. So far what it has changed into is both dangerous and creative. It is both smart and more than occasionally stupefying. It makes people hate the press broadly

and it also makes people find their heroes among the press. It is not brave, this new world, but it is new. (Applause)

Mr. Jones: Rachel Maddow will take questions. Aarti?

Ms. Shahani: My name is Aarti Shahani. Very nice to have you here and to bring us together on a Sunday night. I am in my second year at the Kennedy School of Government. Fixated on the conversation between you and Jon Stewart the other day and wanted to ask you to reflect a little bit critically on liberal media's coverage of the Tea Party. It's not monolithic, right? Sarah Palin, the sex kitten, Ron Paul, the anti-immigrant who is also against the war on drugs, it's a huge spread. And I'm wondering, do you think that the caricaturing of the Tea Party, if you think that there is one, has actually hurt the ability to look at the parts of it that might be going progressive, the anti-elite for example, to redefine a center that is in fact more progressive?

Ms. Maddow: Thank you very much for the question and let the record show that "Sarah Palin as sex kitten" was your characterization and not mine. (Laughter)

I don't even want to get near the feline part of that. (Laughter)

I think that it is worth interrogating caricatures of all kinds in politics. And I think that the Tea Party has been very easily caricatured. I think you have seen an admission of that in an attempted correction on that when the host on Fox News Channel, Glenn Beck, advised his followers to stop wearing dumb costumes to events. Like, stop dressing up as the Statue of Liberty. The thing that was very awkward about that is because the same day, I think it was the same day, if it wasn't the same day it was the same week, Clarence Thomas's wife had just launched the new, "buy foam Statue of Liberty headpieces from me at Liberty Central," at her Tea Party merchandising organization. So there have been some, I think, two steps forward, two steps back. You think I made it up, that it's not true. (Laughter)

I think that it has been an easily caricatured thing. I think that we are always looking for things to easily caricature in politics. I will say though that the initial coverage that I did of the Tea Party actually featured Ron Paul. And featured some of the people who had done Tea Parties before they were branded as Tea Parties this year. Because that is something, it goes back to the tax protest movement and it goes back generations. In the 1976 bicentennial celebrations here in Boston, the Tea Parties that happened, and that were sort of on the progressive side of the way that people wanted to celebrate the bicentennial of the country in a more progressive way.

So I am interested in a lot of the nuances and history of it. And that was easier to do at the beginning before it became a big astroturfed corporate front group.

Mr. Engardio: Hi, my name is Joel Engardio. I am a mid-career student at the Kennedy School. I have a free speech question. Freedom in America is complex. For example, gays seek equality from a constitution that allows religions to say gay is sin. And this fall we have seen a number of gay teens commit suicide. We have also seen a great campaign, the It Gets Better campaign, which adults, gay and straight, tell kids, hang in there, it gets better. But the founder of the campaign, Dan Savage, the columnist, has been very vocal saying religion is part of the problem and that religious leaders who make gay teens feel worthless actually could be accomplices to their death. So my question is, in your opinion, how do we make or help gay teens feel better about themselves when their parents are raising them in religions that use anti-gay religious speech protected by the First Amendment?

Ms. Maddow: It's a big and complicated question. I think that my big-picture advice on gay rights—I try to always preface by saying that

gay people should come out. That is, people who are gay, bisexual, lesbian or transgendered have a responsibility to our own community, because we are a community, to be out. And there are circumstances under which people face incredible discrimination, and I don't judge anybody who

...people who are gay, bisexual, lesbian or transgendered have a responsibility to our own community, because we are a community, to be out.

chooses not to come out. But to the extent that it is possible to do so, everybody needs to because every person who comes out is a potential lifeline for somebody who is considering whether or not they can ever come out. And so if the country is filled with literally tens of millions of lifelines, we are in a better position than we are if people feel like they are alone. So I think to me that's always just been part of my personal ethics around it. In terms of the

religious freedom and constitutional protections for civil rights, the Right has caricatured the efforts to defend the separation of church and state as secularism, as if it is forcing an atheism almost on our national discussions about what is right and what is wrong. I am a very firm believer in the separation of church and state because I don't think I have any right as a public figure, and certainly if I were ever a politician (which I will never be), to tell anybody anything about their faith. Nor do I think that anybody else's faith should govern what our public policy is on matters of constitutional freedoms. So I think standing up for the separation of church and state and refusing to allow it to be caricatured is one way to move forward on civil rights, and civil rights save lives. (Applause)

Mr. Berkenfeld: My name is Jason Berkenfeld. I'm a senior at the college and president of the Harvard College Democrats and I am here tonight with a few members of our organization. Two-part question. The first part is related to claiming the moral high ground. You spoke a lot about how both the liberal media and the conservative media fall victim to this us-versus-them mentality where both sides claim to be right and claim that the other side is wrong. Now, as a Democrat, and I'm sure you may agree, I tend to believe that our side is right and the other side is wrong. (Laughter)

Ms. Maddow: I certainly hope so. (Laughter)

Mr. Berkenfeld: Related to that, how do you step back, and from the objective point of view, prove that we are right and the other side is wrong and avoid claims of simply being biased? (Laughter)

And the second part, we actually have these t-shirts that we are selling that depict Glenn Beck and it says, "Glenn Beck got one thing right:

he dropped out of Yale,” because Glenn Beck took a class at Yale. So we wondered if we would be able to give one of these shirts to you at the end of the show.

Ms. Maddow: I would certainly accept the t-shirt from you, I will not wear it. You can't make me. (Laughter)

But thank you. And thank you for being politically active in college and for being involved in political activism. I think that you prove that you are right in the same way that you are taught to prove that you are right in philosophy class. I think that in order to be right you need the facts on your side. You need a good appreciation not only of the evidence that is on your side, but the evidence arrayed against you, the appropriate way to organize it and a memorization of enough of those things that you can be quick in rebutting people who try to take advantage of you not understanding that.

The skill of argument is the thing about my job that is most difficult and most exciting and most rewarding. You have to be good at making a case for yourself. Your conviction that you feel right is actually a disadvantage in winning an argument. You need to understand more about the other side of your argument than you do about your own in order to build the best strongest case for it. Take philosophy and math classes if you still have time.

Your conviction that you feel right is actually a disadvantage in winning an argument.

Ms. Grant: Hello, my name is Sorby Grant and I am a second-year student here at the Kennedy School and I am also one of the lead editors for the LGBTQ policy journal, which is actually in its first year. We are going to be publishing in the spring. And as far as we know we are currently the only of its kind. We come to you today for some advice, given the fact that you are one of the few who talked about the Ugandan situation, one of the few who constructively discussed LGBTQ issues. What are some of the gaps that you think we should be filling in the public policy discourse?

Ms. Maddow: In terms of international?

Ms. Grant: International and national.

Ms. Maddow: Let me ask you specifically. Do you mean what do I think that you could most effectively advocate for from the perspective that you are in now or are you asking what we should do as a country?

Ms. Grant: What we should be doing from the position we are in.

Ms. Maddow: Be junior reporters. Find out stuff that is happening that other people don't know is happening and prove it. One of the reasons that I think that people assign the rise of opinion-driven cable news responsibility for the death of reporting is because reporters don't get front paged

in the way that they do on a network news broadcast. A network news broadcast, we'll go to our correspondent in Kabul for more on that. Hi, I'm the reporter who learned this information and that put on an incredibly nice suit, here's the information. But even though we don't front page it in that same way because we are personality driven, everything that we do depends on reporting.

Frankly, without factual information on which to base arguments, we can't make arguments about these things. So one thing that's nice about student journalism and about academic work is that there is a collegiality of the academy that allows you to reach people, to reach students, to reach other people doing academic writing in countries that maybe Americans should understand more about what is going on in them. So make connections in Uganda if you want to talk about Uganda. Make connections with people in places like Venezuela. There are other places in which there are things that are of great interest in which if you can bring the facts to light and prove them you will drive the national discussion, as well as, I think, illuminating your own readers.

Ms. Gladden: Hi, I am J.D. Gladden from the Graduate School of Education. And I am just curious if you might speak a little bit about your experiences throughout your career, how your sexuality has affected your rise to fame or what kind of obstacles you face at all, if you are willing to speak about that a little bit.

Ms. Maddow: Thank you for the question. I think my answer will disappoint you. I have been asked this before and I find it hard to answer because I have never been a straight person. And when I was, I was in high school and very awkward. (Laughter)

So I did not set out to do this as my job, I fell into it. And I have been out and totally out since I was 17. And so I don't know. It's hard for me to know what, where, if there are things, if I would be further along in my career than I am now. If it's a meritocracy, if it's prejudice, I don't know. There have been very few instances in my life in which I think people told me exactly what they were thinking about me. And it's probably true of most of us here. You don't get much of it to your face until it is too late. So I don't know. I am real happy with my job though. (Laughter)

Student: I'm a senior at Harvard College. I have found inspiration from your work as an AIDS activist, particularly your participation in the "Gore's Greed Kills" protest of 1999. And recently AIDS activists at Harvard, Yale and Dartmouth have disrupted President Obama's speeches because he has broken his campaign promises on global AIDS funding. Though many journalists have claimed that there is an enthusiasm gap among young progressives, I would argue that young people are now

beginning to fight for a truly progressive agenda for issues like global AIDS or Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

My question to you is this, would you consider doing a story on young progressives who are trying to hold their politicians accountable on both the left and the right?

Ms. Maddow: I consider stuff all the time, so I am considering that right now. (Laughter)

So in direct and respectful response to the pointed nature of your question, I don't do stories on request. However I think that the premise of your question is absolutely based in fact. And there is a bipartisan facile rejection of direct-action politics that is boring in the mainstream media, in that anybody participating in direct-action politics is assumed to be immature and not worth engaging with, in the mainstream media. And I define mainstream in a broad sense. And I don't share that.

I think that direct-action activists are not only brave, they are sometimes right and they are often very articulate advocates for their own position. So I am interested in direct action. I am interested in what progressive politics means in the age of Obama and I think we cover that in an ongoing way. But most of all, thank you for being active in the type of work that you do. And thanks for the question.

Ms. Zavadski: Hi, thanks for being here. My name is Katie Zavadski I'm a sophomore at the College. I am also a board member of the Harvard College Democrats. A mentor of mine once told me that journalists are journalists because they believe that reporting what goes on in the world is the best method they have for changing the world. And I think that is something that I and a lot of students here struggle with about whether as progressive people who believe in social justice, if we can best change the world through journalism or through engaging in the political process by working on campaigns or running for office. So I was just curious about how you personally realized that your method of changing the world was through journalism rather than politics.

Ms. Maddow: I stopped trying to change the world on March 9, 2004. That was my first day at Air America. My life up until that point had been, and my primary self-definition, was as an activist. And in deciding to do media as a full-time thing, I quite literally stopped being an activist and started being a different thing. All of the different things that I was responsible for and the different kinds of activism that I was doing. I remember

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sending out mass emails and saying I will no longer be doing this for a while, while I start doing this other thing. I have a feeling it is not going to last, so I'll be back in a few months. (Laughter) Sorry you guys!

I think a lot of people still see me as an activist. I do not. I do think that it is possible to try to change the world through journalism, but it takes an incredible optimism to approach it that way.

So I think a lot of people see, because I share my opinion as part of what I do, I think a lot of people still see me as an activist. I do not. I do think that it is possible to try to change the world through journalism, but it takes an incredible optimism to approach it that way. I think what journalists do is they increase the amount of useful information in the world. That you are trying to not change the world but explain it.

And it is an incredible leap of optimism to think that good explaining will lead a well-informed populace to make changes for the better that you will agree with. It is an almost sublime faith in human possibility that every once in a while I feel, but mostly I don't.

Mr. Biblarz: Hi, my name is Jimmy Biblarz. I'm a freshman in the college and I am from Los Angeles, California. I also am not a big fan of the cold. As someone who has often been categorized as one of the kids these days, I tend to agree with you about lamenting nostalgically old sources. But I have a question about new media, as you talked about. With the

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decline of network- and newspaper-driven media, how do you guarantee that with the advent of cable driven- and blog-based media, that low-income people have access to high-quality news?

Ms. Maddow: One thing that is, I think, positive about the change for low-income people and other traditionally marginalized people is that without one big voice of God authority as the

expectation for what counts as solid news, what counts as high-quality news, there is room for voices that are not just that one elite voice. So I think that means there is room.

We certainly have not realized its potential yet, but there is room for a lot more different types of people to be involved in authoritative discussion. You see it, I think, now that the blog world is mature enough now

that I think we have seen it evolve in an utterly meritocratic way. Blogs that are good blogs that give authoritative information and that move the ball forward and that often are the most reported of all the blogs have risen to become full-time jobs for the people who run those blogs. It is a meritocracy. And that is blind in the best possible way.

So I do think there is a real possibility to add more diverse voices to the mix and that is already happening and that is awesome. In terms of getting high-quality news, I mean the cheapest thing will always be the most available. But what helps right now is that almost everything is free.

Mr. Wittenberg: Hi, I'm David Wittenberg. I am a second year student in the law school. I wanted to push you to define a little more your thoughts on Keith [Olbermann]'s recent incident. I mean, given the fact that you and Keith are each already doing some form of advocacy on MSNBC, aren't his donations in keeping with what is already going on and don't they fulfill some sort of primeval liberal desire to just throw a brick?

Ms. Maddow: I think that there is a broad spectrum of views on this within the business. I don't speak for anybody other than myself in saying this. I am very comfortable with NBC's rule against those of us who are on TV donating to candidates. And as I mentioned in this speech, I think that it is not to protect us. Whether or

not Keith or I or anybody on TV gave money to somebody doesn't actually tell you much more about our political views than we are already acting out on television. That's not the point. I think people sort of miss the point. The point is protecting politics. If politicians know that they can raise money from pundits

and raise money on pundit shows, that changes politics in a way. We saw that with the Sharron Angle candidacy for Senate in Nevada. She was the Republican Party's nominee against Harry Reid. And she stopped doing all local media in Nevada, despite the fact that it was Nevada voters voting on her, because she didn't want to lose the opportunity cost of perhaps raising money on Sean Hannity's show.

So she was only doing media in which she would not get asked difficult questions, but she could raise money. That is great for Sean Hannity. That is not doing any damage to the Fox News brand. But it is doing damage to the ability of the people of Nevada to make a judgment about that candidate based on questions from reporters who understand Nevada issues and demand Nevada answers. It is bad for governance for people in media to give donations or to be raising money on the air for candidates. I don't really think it has much of an effect on what we do.

It is bad for governance for people in media to give donations or to be raising money on the air for candidates.

Student: I am a first-year student at the Kennedy School. My question has to do with the charge leveled by conservatives against the mainstream media that it tends to be biased in favor of Democrats. There seems to be a belief out there that to be considered truly unbiased or non-partisan the media basically needs to split the difference between the Democrats and the Republicans, irrespective of the positions held by either side. In practice, however, this seems to place on the media a requirement that if it wants to be seen as non-partisan they have to give at least some kind of credence to, say, fabrications or distortions of the truth, obscurantism. So my question is basically why doesn't the media push back against this notion more vehemently that they are partial to Democrats?

Ms. Maddow: I think we do. I think that we push back on the idea. At least I do not accept the idea that I've got a horse in the race, that I am pulling for a particular party, that I am a Democratic mouthpiece. I think if you ask the White House if they felt like I was an effective Democratic mouthpiece for them they would be very annoyed with even the question. So I think that I push back on it. And I also think that the idea that you give equal time to two sides of every view, as if two sides of every view tells you more of the truth than being judicious in communicating the facts in the relevant context to your viewers. I think really it is only CNN who is still stuck in that and they are paying for it.

Ms. Elrod: Hi, I'm Elizabeth Elrod, one of the co-chairs of the Queer Women's Organization here on campus. Recently Kathy Griffin suggested that America really needs a focused lesbian in the White House. And since you have confirmed over and over again that you will not run for office and we don't have the privilege to elect you, what do you suggest that America look out for?

Ms. Maddow: Oh, my God. I love Harvard. (Laughter)

What focused lesbian should we have for president? I have no idea. Honestly I have no idea. I have never thought about it in those terms ever, but I didn't know that Kathy Griffin said that, and you have totally made my night. So thank you. (Laughter)

Mr. Coffin: Hello, I'm Samuel Coffin. I'm a freshman at the College. There seems to be a lot of frustration with the left wing about what they see as broken campaign promises. But now that the Republicans have taken back the House and a lot of Democrats survived the elections by distancing themselves from a lot of the Obama agenda, how much do you think Obama is going to move to the center in this political environment? How do you think that will further affect his relationship with the left wing in this party?

Ms. Maddow: It's a very good question and it is going to be what we get to focus on for about five minutes. I would love for this to be the inter-

esting thing that we are all watching unfold for the next year in the country, but it seems like the 2012 presidential campaign started the day after the elections, literally started on Wednesday. The elections were on Tuesday. Sarah Palin put her presidential campaign ad out on Wednesday with a big bear at the end of it. (Laughter)

I think that means that very little of the interesting hashing it out that needs to happen among Democrats post this election is just going to get shunted to the side in terms of jockeying for position for 2012. My feeling about this president is that he turns to the center almost reflexively and so I think that I have seen that a lot in the first two years that he has been there. I think he will continue to do that, not necessarily at a greater pace in these next two years.

I do think that if the Democrats in the House keep Nancy Pelosi as Leader, that will be a means of stoking the base and keeping people fired up, which is the Democrats' great lament, right? When the Democratic base is fired up, they are not fired up against Republicans. They are fired up against themselves. So, much to the White House's chagrin, I think Pelosi staying there will keep Democrats fired up on the president's left flank.

Mr. Tofel: I'm Dick Tofel. I'm the general manager of *ProPublica*. I heard you say, I think, that your business in some important ways is bad for governance in this country. What kind of personal responsibility do you feel for that? What do you feel like you need to do? We are not going to vote for federal office in this country for another 24 months. What things can you do to promote a conversation about governance?

Ms. Maddow: I think that it is a totally fair and good question. I think that I recognize that what drives viewers, and therefore what drives influence, is political conflict. My own conscience drives me to not hype it, but to still present it. The way that I think about my patriotic responsibilities in this business that I am in is to make policy make TV, to force policy onto the air instead of just politics.

So that doesn't just mean going to Afghanistan so that we end up doing wall-to-wall coverage of the war and nothing else those days that I am there. It means going to Afghanistan and doing those shows in a way that keeps the ratings up, so that I can keep going, so that other people will be able to go, too, and so that I get to stay on the air. So it's this constant leavening of what I think is useful with what I know works. I really enjoy the stuff that works. I really enjoy talking about politics and political con-

When the Democratic base is fired up, they are not fired up against Republicans. They are fired up against themselves.

flict. I am super interested and engaged and have a great time doing that, so it's not like spinach. It's all right.

But to force discussions about governing and about policy and about things that don't even have legislation attached to them but are big questions about what is right for the country is the stream we swim up every day. But it is something that I think about every day. Thank you for the question.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Rachel Maddow. (Applause)

I want to thank you all. I want to thank Rachel Maddow, congratulate Bill Greider, the Shorenstein family, the Nyhan family. We will continue this conversation tomorrow morning with a panel that will include Charlie Gibson, Mindy Finn, David King and Susan Milligan. I am going to be very interested to hear what you might have to say about what Rachel Maddow was talking about tonight. We hope we will see you there. Thank you very much. Good night.

THE THEODORE H. WHITE SEMINAR

NOVEMBER 15, 2010

Mr. Jones: Welcome to our follow-up panel to the awarding of the Nyhan Prize and the Theodore White Lecture. Rachel Maddow is not able to be with us this morning, but I am very glad to say that Bill Greider is. And we are very happy also to have you. I'm Alex Jones, director of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy.

Last night we had two very stimulating, dense addresses filled with important and disturbing ideas. But certainly food for much thought. And this morning our goal is to do a little thinking and certainly to try to identify some of the issues that were presented last night and question them, flesh them out, see where we might go with them from here.

To do that we have assembled a distinguished panel and I will introduce them briefly and then we will proceed. To your left is David King. David is on the faculty at the Kennedy School and he also teaches during the venerable Program for Newly Elected Members of Congress.

Next to him, Charlie Gibson, the distinguished journalist who was the anchor of ABC's *World News with Charles Gibson* and also long-time host of *Good Morning America* at ABC News and before that, someone who has covered Congress in great depth and has seen an awful lot of both television news and politics over his career. He also, as a Shorenstein Fellow this semester, has had the distinction of moderating the absolutely most effective and impactful debate for the governor's race here in Massachusetts in which he began by asking each of the candidates to explain the poetry of their campaigns. The response was utter blank looks from all of them. What a great question.

Next to him is Mindy Finn. Mindy is a Republican, someone who has been very deeply involved with political campaigns, new technology, finding ways to harness new technology and social media and other mechanisms for the purposes of campaigning. She is from Texas. She is a loyal Texan but she is also someone who is a graduate of BU and knows this region well. We are very glad to have you with us, Mindy.

Bill Greider, as you know, is the winner of the Nyhan Prize last night and a distinguished journalist who wears a red clown's nose on his nose upon occasion.

Mr. Greider: That really made an impression.

Mr. Jones: It did. I was deeply impressed.

Mr. Greider: That was for my grandchildren.

Mr. Jones: But he also clearly is very thoughtful and concerned, optimistic but concerned. And last night his remarks were very provocative. I found them so certainly.

And finally Susan Milligan. Susan is a veteran political journalist and writer at *The Boston Globe*. She has covered New York City Hall, she has covered all kinds of political stories for *States News Service*, for *The New York Daily News*, *The Boston Globe* and so forth. She is the co-author of *Last Lion: The Fall and Rise of Ted Kennedy* and winner of a number of journalism awards.

I have asked each of the panelists to very briefly speak about some aspect of what they heard last night that they found arresting. Either something that they did not think of before but found they agreed with, something that they felt was wrong, something that they heard that made an impression. I think there was so much going on last night and it was very hard especially to keep up with Rachel Maddow.

We are going to hear from each of the panelists in turn. Then we will have a general discussion and then we will invite you to join it. And I hope that you will. Let's start with you, David King. What did you hear last night? Well, first of all, are any of the new congressmen signing up?

Mr. King: Yes, we have new congressmen showing up, and we are trying to boost the numbers at all moments and if you know any of the new members, I would like to talk to you afterward so we can put in some direct calls.

Mr. Gibson: You're worried about ratings? (Laughter)

Mr. King: I'm worried about ratings, absolutely. We have had the program since 1972. We lost it for one year in the 104th Congress when we were boycotted not just by the Republicans but also by the Democrats. And we've had it ever since. We always run the program after that first year with at least 50 percent of the new members. We anticipate getting that again this year.

Mr. Jones: So, last night.

Mr. King: There was so much to cover from last night and I want to touch on one thing that was interesting, the resonance between our two award winners last night about the Tea Party. Because both mentioned that the Tea Party is real and tapping into this difference between elites in Washington and political elites generally and the great disaffected. And I know many of the political scientists, sort of arm-chair political scientists, have been looking at groups like the Tea Party and saying, well, it was all ginned up on new media. They are all reading the same websites and that's where they are getting excited.

But I want to underscore that new media alone doesn't really do anything. It can get people excited, but it doesn't make activists. And what the Tea Party has done very effectively is actually get people to move, to go door to door, to talk to friends. And you can use high tech, but ultimately it comes down to that personal touch, looking somebody in the eye and saying it's crazy what's going on in Washington today. It is not enough to read. It is not enough to see a video clip on YouTube and become angry. Mobilization still takes place, person to person.

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I believe this is something that the parties have really missed out on. The parties have fallen down. The parties are now just conglomerations of the moneyed interests who support specific candidates. And those candidates are doing very poorly in terms of reaching out door to door, person to person and building a grassroots movement. I think we have a lot to learn from groups like the Tea Party movement, and that is, get in somebody's head, but then reach out and touch them and ask them to become part of something bigger. That's the first thing that resonated. Thanks.

Mr. Jones: Charlie?

Mr. Gibson: Well, I look forward to hearing what resonated with Bill Greider from Bill Greider's remarks. (Laughter)

Actually I would take a pass on Bill's. I don't know that you ever remember this, but you and I used to ride the M4 bus together.

Mr. Greider: I remember it well, Charlie. I would run out the front door with my shirttail out racing for the bus and pleading for them to stop. And you would look out the window of the bus and smile. (Laughter)

Mr. Gibson: And I would occasionally say to the driver, stop for that man. But for me it was a great two-person seminar on journalism on that bus riding from Utah Avenue down to Connecticut Avenue where we would transfer to the buses. So I would take a pass on Bill's remarks. But I was, needless to say, interested in what Rachel had to say.

And there were two things that struck me most about what she had to say. Number one was her question, which I really hadn't thought of in the context that she posed it, but will you feel comfortable getting news from

...will you feel comfortable getting news from people who have a decided point of view? Are you comfortable in accepting that? Because that is the future.

people who have a decided point of view? Are you comfortable in accepting that? Because that is the future. And that worries me. I am not comfortable with it. I have thought about it during the night and I finally decided, no, I am not comfortable with it.

David Brinkley used to say, there is no such thing as objectivity, there are just lesser degrees of subjectivity. That's what we need to strive for in the roles that we are in. And there are perfectly acceptable niches in broadcasting and in journalism for points of view, etcetera. But where you get the "news" on which you may base opinions, I still don't want it from someone with a point of view. So having thought about it, she posed the question in a different way, but I come out with a negative answer in my own mind.

And the second thing she said which I thought was interesting, she made an admission that I was surprised to hear her make, at least—I may be misquoting her but I make a living out of misquoting people. (Laughter)

She said that her kind of broadcasting and the kinds of programs that she is involved in may be good for politics but they are not good for governance. And I agree with her on that. I thought it was a startling admission for her to make. And I think it is very true.

Mr. Jones: Mindy.

Ms. Finn: Well, there were actually several aspects of what Rachel said that I agree with. As both Bill and Rachel talked about the Tea Party and the types of frustration that has given rise to the Tea Party, they discussed that it is similar to the rise of the movement that pushed Barack Obama to the nomination of the Democratic Party, to the extent that it is a populace movement. And that is something I absolutely agree with and it's something that activists, people that are part of the grassroots on both the right and the left can find common ground on.

One of the last things she said gave me pause, which is someone asked her if she felt any responsibility for contributing to the 24/7 coverage of the political battles. And as Charlie says, that not being very good for governance. What I understood her to say and again, I am probably misquoting her, just to paraphrase, what I understood her to say is that she has to engage in coverage of the political battles to be able to draw viewers. And by drawing viewers it gives her the platform then to be able to insert coverage of important topics like policy and governance.

I thought that was brutally honest. And it's a reality. But to me that isn't any different than any politician, particularly a lot of the ones on the right that she decries who engage in hyperbole and shouting and then can say, well, this gives me credibility. This is what drives my influence so that I am able to engage on policy issues and my positions on policy issues that I think are important.

And later in talking with her as well, she is very clear to draw a distinction between herself and figures like Glenn Beck or Sean Hannity on the right. I don't think that's fair. I enjoy watching Rachel as someone who is a political junkie. I enjoy MSNBC because it's the only network that gets into the inside baseball. I also like watching broadcast news. I also like listening to NPR. So I think there is room for both.

But I don't think it is fair to draw that distinction. Obviously she disagrees but I think on both sides it is entertaining and that's why they draw viewers. Entertainment draws viewers. Both figures, both the Glenn Becks and the Rachel Maddows, would say that we are contributing to the discussion and sometimes you have to raise it to the level of hyperbole and shouting and snarkiness to get people to listen. I think they are right, but they are both doing the same thing.

Mr. Jones: Bill.

Mr. Greider: I thought it was all brilliant. (Laughter)

Let me just change the frame a little bit from what I said and also what Rachel said last night. And I've written this more than once in *The Nation*. I think the apex or the beginning of the down curve of an industrial revolution, technological revolution and those of us who have been across the last 50 years in the media know again and again and again—I worked, one of my first jobs

when I was still in college was an afternoon newspaper in Cincinnati, the labor working-class newspapers, which was educational for me.

And what destroyed the afternoon newspapers? Television. Because people came home from the plant at 4:30 or even earlier in the afternoon, maybe had a beer at the neighborhood bar and then went home and read the newspaper, had an early dinner, etcetera. When TV came on, the contest was over. It took 30 years to wipe them out, but that's what happened. Then you get lots of other inventions.

What excites me now is that I think the digital mechanics, many of which I reject, I leave for the next generation, tweeting and all that stuff. But it empowers individuals across distance and time and wealth. The Tea Party discovered some of that. I know other groups that are using it. And I think we have to be a little patient with folks, but I think we are literally in

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a time where Americans are reinventing how they communicate with each other.

There are lots of reasons they want to communicate. Politics is only one of them, an important one. But I can see further developments arising, which kind of diffuses the argument I make about the elite press or Rachel makes about the different kinds of TV shows. There will always be those different kinds of TV shows. But given that we've got what do we have, 800 channels, a thousand channels? I can see programming arising, low cost, that does not require a business plan and a profit motive.

And when people figure out how to make that balance pay you can imagine a proliferation of political communication that isn't based on a profit incentive at all. So it would be nice if we had a political party that actually encouraged this in a broader more positive way. The reason we don't is because it is quite threatening to concentrated power. And that is corporate, political and so forth and so on. So I'm with the folks in the street and I hope they move quickly to seize this advantage.

Mr. Jones: Susan.

Ms. Milligan: I was fascinated actually with both addresses last night. Although I would have wanted to see more of an exploration of the implications of some of it. I think that Rachel was right in saying that obviously the media world has changed and people hate the media. And they don't care that journalism is in decline. I would have liked to have seen more of a discussion of how dangerous that is for democracy.

And when she talked about Dick Armev and saying people shouldn't go on committees, I did not know that and that was just stunning to me. Actually, it wasn't stunning, but the detail was stunning to me. People have talked about whether things are really worse than they have ever been. Oh, they say that all the time, and it is. I have been in and out of it for 30 years and it's never been this bad.

There is such an utter state of dysfunction in Washington right now. To literally say we are not going to participate in the political process by doing the work on the committees is startling to me. But it even gets as petty as when the Blackhawks won the Stanley Cup, Dick Durbin introduced your usual resolution honoring the Chicago Blackhawks. And it is just something they do in five seconds on the floor and they have a little thing they put on the wall. And a Republican senator, I was told it was Jim DeMint, put a hold on it. So they have to go through the judiciary committee if they want to get this through. And it has gotten to that level of pettiness now in Washington.

Nobody talks to each other. They are in a constant campaign. They don't get anything done. This is very, very dangerous for democracy. But what is happening that is just as bad is that the media is now enabling

that by focusing constantly on conflict and constantly on the battle and constantly on the campaign. So if you look at some of the stories that were written the Sunday after the elections last week, so many of them were, what does this mean for 2012? It's just constantly about the campaign.

So you are not really even putting any pressure at all on people in public office to actually legislate and actually govern. And the nexus of these two trends is so terrifying to me in terms of what it means for a democracy. And I don't think that we just have to accept it. I mean, that was the one thing that did bother me a little bit last night, that when she was saying, well, this is just the way the media is now. Will people just get their news and their information from watching these shows?

I don't think we have to just say, oh, those nostalgic days when we actually wrote news stories and tried to write some balanced and fully reported story on something. A lot of people wrote the same stories so you could get different perspectives on it. I don't think we have

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to say, well, those days are gone. I think the delivery system might be different. I think some newspapers may become a little bit more niche, at least the printed edition. But that I don't accept. I don't accept that that is just a trend that we have.

Mr. Jones: Rachel Maddow made the point I think very powerfully, that the one successful area of news right now is cable news shows, Glenn Beck, Bill O'Reilly, Rachel Maddow. She told me last night as we were walking over for dinner that MSNBC is essentially the only profitable enterprise at NBC News and it basically supports the NBC News operation that feeds her the news that you are talking about, Charlie.

Mr. Gibson: Alex, let me interrupt you for a second. There was a bit of crowing on her part that the day of cable has come. And she talked about it almost as a three-part universe of Fox, MSNBC and CNN. There are those things called "over-the-air networks" that still exist. But she is right about the business model. The business model at the moment for ABC News and CBS News is unsustainable. And it is sustainable at NBC only because of MSNBC. But that is not because the audiences are so disproportionate for cable.

People are not rushing to cable. The audience that she has, she may have fans in a crowded Harvard, but the audience that she has is minuscule. It is also extraordinarily small compared to the over-the-air networks. And I admit that the over-the-air networks do not have the kind of impact that they had in the Cronkite and Huntley-Brinkley days, Frank Reynolds

days. But they still way, way overwhelm the audiences that are going to her show or the other.

The difference is that the over-the-air networks have only on-air advertising to support them. Whereas the cable networks have subscription fees. So every time you send your \$35 or whatever it is to Comcast or to your cable network, 12 cents of that is going to MSNBC, or 15 cents or 18 cents is going to ESPN. Some money is going to CNN and to Fox. That is the way those operations are very profitable. It is simply the fact that those subscription revenues are denied the over-the-air networks.

Mr. Jones: Okay, I take your point. But the thing that she was saying and I think it was what she was trying to get at was how important what NBC News does to what MSNBC does, what she does. The information that she uses to riff on and analyze and talk about is coming from a model that she was saying last night, and I think with some justification, is in real jeopardy. And she was also, of course, making the point that what she does, what they all do on cable news style format undermines governance.

Now, David, I want to ask you is that really true, or is this just the way that governance is working now and probably has worked at some time in the past in that the idea that there is a perpetual campaign, that there is a lot of emotion and partisanship? Is that simply a different form of governance or is that non-governance?

Mr. King: It's a different form of governance and it's not new. These are the kinds of cycles that we have seen several times in the past, certainly on the run-up to the Civil War during the 1820's. Times when the country was really unclear. The parties were also uncertain about the direction of the country. And right now there is not a lot of clarity from the parties about what the direction of the country will be. More importantly, there is not a lot of clarity among the American people.

This kind of polarization is not new. This kind of toxicity is not particularly new. It is all new in our lifetime. And there is then for most of our lives a terribly misplaced faith in the two-party system, in parties in general believing that parties are what supports democracy when that is simply not the case. Political parties and candidates, it is not in their business model actually to support democracy, *per se*. Their business model is to get as many votes as they need, not as many votes as they can possibly get, but as many votes as they need, subject to a budget constraint.

They go after potential voters who have a history of having voted, of not being a particular pain in the butt about trying to get out to vote. And to the extent possible suppressing the votes of folks who haven't voted in the past. And if it is not necessarily in the interests of the parties or of candidates to vigorously support democracy, whose job is it? Well, it's my job as a parent. It's my job as a teacher. It's everyone in this room's job as some-

body's friend, it's our church's jobs and it has been, I believe, the job of responsible journalism for a very long time.

And that is really missing right now, holding democracy writ large accountable. I would love to be able to watch an evening news show without seeing yet another advertisement for yet another disease that I never heard of and then the reporting follows, not focusing necessarily on the broad problems of public health. And you multiply that over and over and over again, part of the support of democracy that we cannot and should never expect from our political parties and from our candidates, we're losing. And that is a vigorous reporting.

Mr. Jones: How do you react to what David has just said?

Ms. Finn: Well, I don't think that it's Rachel Maddow or Glenn Beck's responsibility, for that matter, for the gridlock, for the lack of solving problems in governance for the partisanship. It is a reality though of the era in which we live that the politicians are more exposed than they ever were. And I think coming into the Internet era, initially that was seen as a positive.

If the American people have more access to their politicians, the politicians are more transparent. They see the politicians, the elected officials as humans. And they know more what is going on. That's a positive. If they have things like cable news, if they have blogs, if they have even journalists who are writing more stories per day, that's a positive.

But I think one of the dangers is that the focus of the job of a senator or a congressman has changed and taken them out of the actual day-to-day governing and solving problems — that the job of a legislator is more of a spokesperson. And it has even resulted in the way senatorial candidates have stopped

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doing local media because part of what they think a senator needs to do is to become more of a national figure. And they are all vying for that. And they have an outlet to do it in a way that they couldn't before. And not only does it make them more influential, but they raise money off of it. They

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rally grassroots. They build a following outside their state and their domain.

So it is a reality in which we live. But one thing I would point out to what Rachel said that I did agree with, which is I accept what Charlie and Susan are saying in that we don't just have to accept that everything is moving to the fractured media and it is important to have hard news and straight reporting. But she said something very interesting which is, and paraphrasing once again, rather than just saying stop and

trying to push it back, which is what she sees a lot of people doing, and it's something politicians, I think someone who works with candidates, they tried to do it with the Internet for a long time. They took a cower-and-fear approach: if we just ignore it, it is going to go away.

And then you had things like the Macaca moment with George Allen and they saw that couldn't be the case. What Rachel said is start thinking about how to operate within this new paradigm and accomplish what you

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think needs to be accomplished. So how do you create a business model, Charlie said, that works, where you are still producing hard news? How do you draw viewers in—maybe not people who are loyal fans the way they are with Rachel Maddow and the Glenn Becks? But maybe that's not what you want anyway.

How do you operate within this new paradigm and accomplish what you think needs to be accomplished, which is hard news, better governance?

And I am an optimist. I think we will get there. It is a tumultuous time because, as Bill said, we are moving very quickly into the information age. And people that came out of the industrial age don't know how to operate within it.

Mr. Jones: Bill, how would this thing work? You say you can see it on the horizon because there are multiple cable channels and of course we have the Internet, this non-profit, non-commercial information vehicle that can be fed by individuals and citizens rather than journalists. Flesh that out a little bit as part of your vision.

Mr. Greider: Well, the big cloud that is over all of our heads, and David King's remarks I thought really went to the core, is that we have been taught by two generations of professors and propaganda to see everything as a business model. That isn't why we exist or not why I exist, to make a profit and to have a balance sheet at the end where you can say we won the competition. We have a society here composed of people of great diversity and talent, etcetera. And democracy was supposed to serve that society.

You can take different sectors of the media, newspapers are the ones that we know most familiarly. And it happened in my lifetime where the competition that used to exist which had diversity, you knew which newspaper you were reading and whether it was the newspaper you could trust or the folks across town could trust. But there was a multiplicity. That gets wiped out.

And we then enter a long, very, very profitable era of what I call monopoly capitalism. That's what it was. And that was first in each town. You made sure that the other guy was out of business and you've got the whole pie yourself. You can tell that story again and again across America. And then along comes Gannett and says, well, we can make a chain of monopoly capitalism and that will be even more profitable. And indeed it was. And that allows you to forget some of the stuff David King was talking about, your obligations to democracy, etcetera, because that is just overhead you don't need anymore.

And then technology comes along to destroy those monopolies. That is what is happening now. And I say hooray. I don't know what replaces them. But I resist the idea of having to come up with a business plan that shows you can make a profit doing this. When we talk that way, what we're doing is wiping out the tradition of public interest and the commonality of what people need. And I want to see a really ferocious fight. I think it doesn't feel like it yet, but I think we are on the brink of that.

And we could all talk about the icons of fierce, individualistic competition. I would like to get Milton Friedman back for a few days to talk to him about what he taught Americans to believe was in their interest and where

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we are now. My point is if we get a restoration of that democratic interest in enough people and I hear some sounds of it coming from the Tea Party, and I ask myself why isn't there a left version of that, or at least a labor version?

I would like to see 12 Tea Parties building around elections and they will have a kind of fierceness and uncompromising sense of what they want from politics. That's self interest. Nobody has to have an accounting of what is profit and what is loss. People will do it when they see themselves interested in it.

It is within Americans, enough of them, to generate that kind of politics. And technologies literally reduce the cost of organizing for people without wealth. That is a great possibility.

Mr. Jones: Can you point to any other place in American history or other place where this has happened?

Mr. Greider: Absolutely. I could go through from the beginning. My favorite period is the Populist Era. There is one book people ought to read to understand what democracy is potentially about, it's Larry Goodwyn's *The Populist Moment*.

Mr. Jones: The turn of the century?

Mr. Greider: It was 1880's. It started right after the Civil War with the great

deflation, the money power crushing farmers all across the South and Midwest. And then it flowered in a political party. It was defeated really in 1896 when William Jennings Bryan, the Democrat, co-opted it with the nomination. It's a long story. What you will get out of this book, and I have echoed it in some of my books, these were people who were desperately defeated by history who knew they had not just the government against them but Wall Street and the bankers and so forth and so on. Most of them were ill-educated barefoot farmers.

They organized their own politics because they knew neither political party would speak to their needs. I think I'm hearing that in what David King is saying—when people get to the stage of need and anger and all the rest, to do that for themselves. We now have marvelous capabilities that the populists didn't have because of all the technologies. We can't compare with the past because we have not a glimmer of how desperate people were in those days. And we are not desperate, even the poorest among us and not in those terms.

It is within Americans, enough of them, to generate that kind of politics. And the technologies literally reduce the cost of organizing for people without wealth. That is a great possibility.

Mr. Jones: Let me get back to *The Rachel Maddow Show* for a moment if we can. The last question that was asked last night was by Dick Tofel. Susan and Charlie, how do you think Rachel Maddow should draw whatever line there might be in her presence and using her influence to be helpful in the next two years as we run up to this presidential election?

Ms. Milligan: Well, I don't think that's necessarily the idea like, well, okay, we'll pay the bills by my going after the conservative media so that I can then use it as a platform for something more substantive. I don't think that is necessarily going to work. I agree with Bill, the whole idea that we even think of the success of something as financial. I mean, when we talk MSNBC being the most successful, it wasn't because it won Peabody Awards. We weren't talking about the journalism they had done, but just how much money they were making.

Of course we see this all over the place. My father is fond of telling me that when he was a kid he didn't know how much money Joe DiMaggio made and now the sports pages, we define a successful athlete as somebody who gets some huge salary. So I am not naïve enough to think that her ability to stay on the air, *The Globe's* ability to keep publishing, has nothing to do with finances. Of course it does. But I don't like the idea that we just have to accept that you pander to this hyper-political element of the country.

And I don't actually think that the whole country is as partisan as we pretend that it is. I actually think it's some very angry people out there, and they seem more numerous because of the Internet. It gives an opportunity for everyone to have a voice. Unfortunately because everyone can have a voice

people think they need to shout more loudly to be heard and on the Internet shouting more loudly means being more abusive or abrasive or whatever. And the same thing is true on cable TV.

So I don't think she should use her role to just appease this conflict-obsessed part of the media and the public so we can then talk about something substantive. Because I think one poisons the other.

Mr. Jones: Charlie, what is your reaction to that dilemma?

Mr. Gibson: I was not persuaded by her defense that you have to get an audience and then educate them because I think basically that program is about ratings and that's why she has survived. Her ratings are good in

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the MSNBC universe. I wish I could agree with Bill that we were in a position where profits didn't matter. I think we are in the situation where we really are in a transitional stage in terms of the media.

First of all, I disagree with Rachel Maddow when she says people hate the press. I don't think that's true. And I certainly don't find it in relations that I see. People are hungry for information. And I think the vast majority of people are hungry for information that they can trust. But when we sat down, David said to me, please understand that you are the defender of the out-of-date, over-the-air media, etcetera. And you're the old fart. (Laughter)

And I feel that way to some extent. When I grew up we had three voices in television. We now have, as Bill points out, 600 to 700 cable channels, and the half-life of cable television is very short.

Mr. Jones: Really?

Mr. Gibson: Yes. And we are going to be in a situation where the main thing that you see on your television screen will come through your computer. We will link those inexorably and then the number of voices becomes not 600 but essentially infinite. And how that is going to play out, Bill, is the critical question of the age. Whether we are going to have responsible voices in that or whether you get into a greater degree even than we are now of narrow casting where you are looking for just very small subsets of the population. And then in order to be heard you have to yell the loudest, as Susan points out.

That, or it could become a force for good. And we could have many, many responsible voices in that universe that really are dispensing information that you can trust.

Mr. Greider: Can I give an example? And this is not original with me. Others have written about it with better knowledge. But you have in the Boston area an example of what I am trying to envision called Voice of the Faithful. It grew up in this area when *The Boston Globe*, to its great credit and courage, wrote a very tough revealing series on the abuses within the Catholic Church. Armed with that information, and here is where newspapers really, really matter, people around the area first started talking to one another, Catholics who knew or were just outraged or they had personal experiences and so forth. That became an organization that built up here and then started reaching all across the country.

Am I right? I wasn't here so I don't want to mangle the facts, but I think that changed the politics big time for the Catholic Church. For the first time the laity, not sinners, or heretics, but the faithful were armed to speak to the hierarchy in a way they could never have before. That's political changes, really meaningful.

Mr. Jones: One of the things that is wonderful about being at the Kennedy School is that everybody who comes here comes here because they believe they have some role in changing the world for the better. And one of the things that we are teaching at the Shorenstein Center is using technology to create organizations to then use the technology that is available now to make them viable, make them grow, make them become effective.

The Kennedy School is the most international school at Harvard. Half the student body here is from other countries. And some of them have a lot of understanding and expertise of new media. Some of them have almost none. And virtually all of them recognize the power of new media in achieving that objective.

I want to open this conversation to you now. We would like to hear what you have to say.

From the Floor: I share David's pessimism over the enthusiasm over the populist aspect of the Tea Party movement. Because as a student and a teacher of history, it has generally turned out to be rather disastrous for African Americans. What do you think of the question that race in general, and the race of the president in particular, is an initiator, motivator and sustainer of the Tea Party movement?

Mr. Greider: I actually wrote a piece last week called "Obama Without Tears." You can find it on the *Nation* website. And it was, I hope, a fair and basically sympathetic discussion of why I think he has so far had a disastrous presidency, despite his accomplishments. But in that piece I said by being generous, open, modest in his claims on the governing system, unlike other presidents we have known, he left a vacuum. And his opponents filled that vacuum in different ways, not just Republicans, but Democrats as well.

And one of the things they did, the Republicans pursued, they turned all of his best qualities upside down and demonized him as a power-mad socialist and on and on and on. And I called it "racial McCarthyism," because that is what it is. And they should have been called out on it right from the start by the Democratic Party, if not the president. It would be out of character for this president to be that kind of combative person. That's not who he is.

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But if you were alive in the 1950's and 1960's, it is very similar to what Republicans did to liberals and labor lefties in the 1950's.

Mr. Jones: Why racial though?

Mr. Greider: Because he is a black man.

Mr. Jones: What I mean is, is that why or how he did it?

Mr. Greider: It's the context. You don't have to mention that he is a black man. Everybody can see that for themselves. But I am essentially saying, yes, race, you're damn right it's the context beneath the rhetoric,

and you wouldn't make these kinds of accusations against this man, knowing who he is—he has been very self-revealing—if he weren't black, and get away with it.

I think there is a reason so many ads in the campaigns this fall that were against other members of Congress pictured the black president, the female Speaker and the gay committee chairman.

Ms. Milligan: I think there is something else at play here, too. And when I have gone to some of these Tea Party rallies, let's all remember, by the way, this isn't a political party and this isn't a singular movement. I mean it is not a single-minded movement. It's a lot of different groups of people. And they are not all racist, although some of them

certainly are. But I see a lot of middle-aged white men at some of these rallies, and I am going to try to put this in a way that is actually meant to be somewhat compassionate and not just accusatory. But if you are a white man and you are 55 years old and you grew up in this country with a certain set of expectations, your gender and your race pretty much ran the country and your country ran the world, and that is not true anymore.

We can have a great military. People can fly planes into buildings. We used to have this great economy, but China owns us basically at this point because they own so much of our debt. And it is very unsettling. I think there is a reason so many ads in the campaigns this fall that were against other members of Congress pictured the black president, the female Speaker and the gay committee chairman. And it is not that everybody who is out there is a racist or a sexist or a homophobe. It's just got to be a little jarring.

So you are sitting there, you are out of work. The business you were in maybe doesn't even really exist anymore, if you were in heavy manufacturing. And you just look around and see that the whole world that you grew up with is so radically different, I think that that's part of it, too. So that it is not just this pure racism. I just think that a lot of people's worlds have gotten shaken up in the past couple of decades.

Tom Patterson: I wanted to ask about some of the assumptions about the differences between the old media and the new media. Teddy White's last book—we talked last night about his *Making of the President* books—his last book was called *America in Search of Itself*, and had a little bit of the 1980 election in it, but it was also just looking back at this period of covering politics. And he talked a little bit about the impact of his *Making of the President* books, and he said something to the effect of, I wish to hell I had never put that model out there. What he was referring to was the fact that reporting had increasingly tried to pry inside the campaign, truly had tried to become inside baseball. And that separation that Rachel Maddow was talking about last night between campaigning and governing actually predates cable television and it predates Fox News. It began in the late '70's, the '80's, and there is a governing component to campaigning. But that almost fell off the table. And then it crept into coverage of Washington.

There was a great study by Kathleen Hall Jamieson on the 1993/94 health care bill, that it was almost all about who is up, who is down, with very little about the substance of the legislation. The public became increasingly confused and aligned in predictable ways because it was all inside baseball. And then I think about the talk shows. There may, in fact, be more policy on the talk shows. We may not like the way it is presented, but there may be more meat as well as more red meat on the talk shows.

So my question, I think probably is for Charlie and Bill and Susan: Is there a need for the traditional media to reinvent itself? Can it? What would it look like?

Mr. Jones: Charlie?

Mr. Gibson: Yes. (Laughter)

I worry about the same thing, Tom, and one of the reasons I got out was that I didn't think that we were making it any better. And that's an admission that I hate to make. But I didn't see, within the business model, that we were an effective counterweight to the kinds of things that were growing up in other sectors. I don't know how to reinvent it and I think it needs to be done.

Mr. Jones: Mindy, would you comment about this from your perspective as someone who works in campaigns and works that media source?

Ms. Finn: Sure. I guess I am of the belief that it is going to bounce back to some extent. And by that I mean there is so much information out there; it is a constant stream. And if you are somebody who is an elected official or a candidate or even a member of the media who is trying to follow it, it is virtually impossible. And it can make you dizzy. And it can wear you out really fast. And I think one downside of that at this point, is first of all from an elected official standpoint.

Elected officials have been known for a long time to obsess about how their name appears in print, what is said about them, and in the age of television, how they are presented on TV. Now, they have thousands of times that their names are mentioned in “print” or they are talked about. And it is very easy to obsess and get wound up about that as opposed to thinking critically about what is being said, what is important, what actually makes sense and realizing that they are not going to please everybody.

Let’s talk about Rachel Maddow. We have discussed whether she has a responsibility to not further along the noise machine and the shouting.

If everything is about the business model, and the loudest voices that are producing news are not living up to that responsibility, that responsibility comes back onto us as individuals.

And I think that at moments like that you have to ask yourself, as I’m sure some of the esteemed journalists on this panel have, what is my responsibility to my job versus my responsibility as a citizen? And how do I balance those two?

The journalists of old, at least as we perceive them, they were doing both at the same time. The responsibility to their job was also their responsibility as a citizen. If everything is about the business model, and the loudest voices that are producing news are not living up to that responsibility, that responsibility

comes back onto us as individuals. And this goes to what Bill has been saying all along. And it sounds simplistic.

I certainly don’t have all the answers. But I do think that we are going to see a movement, in whatever form it takes, of individuals saying that we need to think more critically about the information that we consume. And we need to be more judicious about where we get our sources of information.

There is an individual named Clay Johnson who works in online politics on the left, who has a blog that is called InfoVegan. I think that is such a brilliant term. His point is, the way that vegans would say that we consume food and we want to leave out the additives and all the things that are bad for you, we need to do the same thing with the information. There is so much information out there, that we need to become info vegans. And I do think that in this world where each individual has an equal voice or an equal opportunity to decide the news for themselves or decide what they are going to do, what movements they are going to join and what causes, that we are going to have to rely less on the one source, “voice of God,” as Rachel Maddow calls it, to decide for us what is important.

The responsibility is going to become more on the individual. People are going to realize they are going to have to do that if they want to remain productive citizens in society and continue to do their patriotic duty.

Mr. Jones: Bill Powers, who is a former Shorenstein Fellow, wrote a wonderful book about consuming information. And he came up with an idea that he has adopted with his family. He calls it the “Internet Sabbath” that they observe from sundown on Friday until Monday morning. And he said it has transformed his family’s life. Now, I don’t know that that’s a solution to anything, but I think it does go to the concept of this overwhelming dependence now, addiction really. And I tried to imagine going a weekend without turning the computer on. It was hard for me to imagine such a thing.

From the Floor: When Rachel Maddow was interviewing Jon Stewart last week, I thought of a book that they didn’t mention. And I hear the same thing here. And that’s *Society of the Spectacle*, written in the ‘60’s by Guy Debord, the Situationist philosopher. That is exactly what you guys are talking about, how the spectacular takes over everything.

Mr. Greider: If you would read *The Nation* you would know about these things. (Laughter)

We don’t have to be spectacular because we are *The Nation* and we have a commitment. I once described it in the acknowledgements in my last book, *The Nation* in summary is a journal with human sympathy and tough-minded reporting. And I am proud to be part of that.

This is why talking about business models as the basis for communication drives me nuts. If that is the basis for communication, you can forget human sympathy and tough-minded reporting because they are circumscribed by the need to serve your idea of the audience. Back to what Tom asked about, when I wrote *Who Will Tell the People* 20 years ago, the basis of that book was that the governing politics is what people care about, not the politics versus the governing. And the idea that those two are separable, look at any news room though, they are separated there. Most Washington political reporters do not know very much about government. They don’t really understand government very well. They are not very interested in it. They cover politics and the campaigns and so forth and so on because they assume that’s what really matters.

And then you have economics reporters and financial reporters who are often very learned in their specialty, but they regard politics as this messy intrusion on economics and financial affairs. Do you see what I mean? The structure of the media institutions more or less guarantees that you won’t get coverage of governing realities because they don’t see that as a subject that really interests their readers.

Felicity Spector: Hi. I work for Channel 4 News in Britain. And when I am in America, I enjoy watching *The Rachel Maddow Show*. Part of me feels slightly uncomfortable because I enjoy it because I agree with it. And I think that the top job of news isn't to re-enforce everyone's opinions.

We are not allowed to be opinionated on the air in Britain; it's against the law. And I like that, because it means that I have my opinions but I keep them to myself...

And I'm worried that we are kidding ourselves, that the Internet is going to empower people to find out information. I think that people with money, who can invest in real journalism and spend the necessary dollars on finding out information out in the world, are going to be the powerful ones. And if we have a media which is disseminating opinionated news, then the people who control what we know are the

people with the money. It's the Rupert Murdochs and the associated newspapers and those kinds of organizations. And I wondered if you feel I am just being outdated and clinging to a system that I believe in. We are not allowed to be opinionated on the air in Britain; it's against the law. And I like that, because it means that I have my opinions but I keep them to myself, and I don't voice them on other people; I only tell them the facts that I think they should know, and then they are able to find out more than that and are challenged about what they think.

Mr. Jones: David King, why don't you respond to that?

Mr. King: Thank you, Felicity. We have been obliquely talking about what is called confirmation bias: People consume information that tells them that they are pretty smart. So people don't want to hear that they are kind of foolish. But most of us tend to be pretty foolish. So this is a problem with the multiplicity of news sources. Some of them are absolutely fabulous and helped build communities such as the small one we have in my town of 24,000 people, which almost everyone now goes online and reads, *The Belmont Patch*. So that's a very narrow source of information. But then when my parents want to know about what is happening, they go to their particularly biased websites that tell them they weren't so foolish after all, all this time. My parents, by the way, yes, you understand through therapy that my parents were foolish all this time. (Laughter)

But I am wondering if that is necessarily a bad thing. My instinct is that it is. But one of my favorite books by Bill Greider is *The Education of David Stockman*. Fabulous piece of reporting, got David Stockman in quite a bit of trouble, had to be taken to the woodshed, for example. But then nothing really changed. The tax cuts went through, we ran up huge deficits and ushered in an era that has led us now towards tremendous future poverty

in this country, at least in terms of budget. And I wonder from you, Mr. Greider, do you think it would have been different if we had the multiplicity of websites and news sources for you to drop *The Education of David Stockman* into an environment such as today, would it have died the way your book died?

Mr. Greider: That's a really good question. I have reached a very similar conclusion and have tried to convince people, because that piece which ran in *The Atlantic* and I thought—this is how naïve I was—I thought as an editor at *The Washington Post* we had pretty much told that story all year long. And we had. And I could, in defense of myself, pull out the clippings where in fact what David Stockman was telling me we had written, albeit not quoting David Stockman, but it was something about the nature of that article, it was a narrative from beginning to end, that allowed people to see what was happening in a way news stories and newspapers do not.

They did pass corrective tax laws. And they also whacked social security with a big tax FICA increase in the following year. But your main point is still right. The political idea of supply-side economics lived ever after for 25 years, and if you listen to the chatter today, it is still very much alive in the Republican Party, where they are devout budget balancers and are, by God, going to cut the deficits. But cutting taxes doesn't have anything to do with that. That's what these guys are saying now. I mean this is lunacy, right?

My sober education in that episode was, okay, you told a pretty good piece of the truth, and that process that the press thinks saves democracy is a whole lot weaker than we would like to believe. I'm not against the process. I am part of it and I will continue to be part of it. But it is the egotism of the press believing, pardon the expression, they are the bulwark of democracy. It's wrong. They are not the bulwark of democracy. And they have moments when they really can move the mountain.

Mr. Jones: What is the bulwark of democracy?

Mr. Greider: The people. The people. And I keep going back to that. And I know, Alex, that that's a tiresome theme, but it really is. And I am starting from a premise that the American idea, which I love and believe in, is that we are on the road to something better. It's a long road, and we are not there. And the idea that we have the model of democracy for the rest

...the American idea, which I love and believe in, is that we are on the road to something better. It's a long road, and we are not there. And the idea that we have the model of democracy for the rest of the world is ludicrous and wrong.

of the world is ludicrous and wrong. And so that is why I get a little smile with the Tea Party folks because they are saying this, however crudely and sometimes wrong-headed they may be, they've got that spirit and good for them.

Ron Weintraub: I am just an informed citizen. I am addressing this, I think, to Mr. Greider. Rachel I believe used a quote yesterday whose provenance remains a little uncertain. That is you may be entitled to your own opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts [Sen. Moynihan]. And given the business model that seems to have in the past supported fact gathering, I was also very much impressed and influenced by John Carroll who was here two or three years ago. And his point was that all of the current media, the private media, the blogs, etcetera, are all derivative of original shoe-leather reporting.

So the question is, where is that community coming from? What is going to pay for the real facts that the public is going to use? What is going to pay for the department of news gathering in Kabul or Cairo or you name it? How is the populace going to get their real facts?

Mr. Greider: Well, I cited the press as an example of monopoly capitalism, which probably is offensive in itself. But in the classic story of monopoly capitalism, when the monopoly is being broken up by other economic forces, they turn to government and demand a subsidy to support them. And as you may have noticed, that's what some newspaper voices are doing now. They propose that the loss of this institution called the daily newspaper with its expertise and its ranks of reporters is so extreme that the government must somehow come to their rescue and subsidize them. And some of my colleagues at *The Nation* are great advocates of this.

But I note that my old friend, Nick Lemann, who is dean of the Columbia Journalism School has advocated it. Leonard Downie, the retired executive editor of *The Washington Post* has advocated it. And it makes me want to scream because if you believe that democracy cannot function without *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* or the Columbia Journalism School, then by all means government should pay for it. We, the taxpayers, should be made to pay for it.

But I promise you down that road leads a nightmare for democracy. And the first time a Muslim newspaper applies for a subsidy, the nightmare will be realized. It's almost silly to even discuss. I'm going to reach into history here a little bit. You all, I'm sure, know the historian Robert Darnton, I think he is at Harvard now. He was at Princeton for many years. He's written a series of books, all of which I have loved, about the pre-revolutionary France. and really they are histories of publishing and book writing. He wrote an essay a few years back which I have drawn upon comparing the last days of the *ancien régime* with our present proliferation

of media. It's in a book with a terribly bad title called *George Washington's False Teeth*, a collection of essays. And he asks the question, since the king owned the newspapers and all other publications were illegal and people got sent to jail if they got caught publishing non-sanctified material, how did the French people communicate with each other before the Revolution? And it wasn't just in Paris, although it was obviously grounded there, but all over the country people rose up because they knew what was happening.

And he describes in loving detail the various forms of communication which French people used in those days to get the news. And then he jumped to our modern technologies and playfully compared the Internet and some of the other devices we now have as a high-tech version of very much the same phenomenon. I am not suggesting we are in a pre-revolutionary mode. But some of the elements are, in fact, similar. So that's a vague answer to your question. The people will find ways to communicate with each other. And the quality of that communication will be as various and irregular and uncertain as it is now.

The people will find ways to communicate with each other. And the quality of that communication will be as various and irregular and uncertain as it is now.

Joel Engardio: Hi, I am Joel Engardio. I'm a mid-career student at the Kennedy School. I think last night there were two central questions. Rachel Maddow asked, are we okay with getting our news from a person with a point of view, and at the dinner later, Professor Joseph Nye asked, is there any reason to be optimistic that things will be better?

So I haven't heard a lot of optimism from the panel, other than maybe Bill Greider, but I am wondering if you can personally talk about optimism that is prefaced with fear. Do we fear the change?

Mr. Jones: I think you have almost answered your own question. (Laughter)

It is pretty hard to imagine anyone would say on this panel, and I may be not representing people, but I don't think there are any pessimists. I think there are just a lot of worried people and certainly a lack of clarity about how it is going to evolve and what will be the good side of it and what will be the bad side of it, and there will be both. The *ancien régime* was blown away and it was followed by The Great Terror and then came other things. I think we all recognize that we are at the beginning of a transformation. And it is progress, and certainly the path that it will take is unclear, but that it is going to happen is without question.

Mr. Greider: Well, let me dissent from that. We are indeed in a transformation, this country is, not to mention the world. But this country, in my view, is in a pivotal turn of history, irrespective of how we feel about China or this president or anything else. It is very profound. It has got six, eight elements to it, which we probably all would recognize. It is going to be very tough and it is going to compel us to change as a people in many ways, most obviously in our manner of consumption.

And my argument is that indeed on the other side we have the possibility of becoming a better place in terms of all of our deepest values. But I have to say the political system that represents us allegedly in government is still in denial on those things, despite some meaningful gestures that this president has made. His work has been to restore the old order that just collapsed. And if you look at everything, and I'm not blaming Obama, I am blaming the Congress, the political community as a whole still wants to tell the people it is okay, we are going to be all right.

They have different solutions of how we are going to be all right. Just to broaden my provocation, particularly the mainstream media, as the bloggers call it, is complicit in that, even though they have written a lot of good stuff. They are likewise in denial.

Ms. Finn: I would like to inject just a piece of optimism—I think it would be optimism for most people in this room—which is that the young generation that we can be concerned about, their loud music and the way they act and maybe that they have a vapid understanding of politics or a skin-deep education—the youngest generation, despite how many people thought with the election of Obama that the people who voted for him for the first time would be Democrats for 30 years, because history shows that when you vote for the first time for a party, you stick to that party, or those who voted for George W. Bush would be Republicans for 30 years. Young people are identifying as Independents in greater numbers than any other age group. They are not labeling themselves. And they are saying, we want the opportunity to be able to look at the discussion and the debate and to determine each time. What happens with that we will see, but to me that is something to be optimistic about in this new environment.

Mr. Jones: Anyone else want to have a last comment?

Sandy Rowe: I have a last quick question if I may. Thanks. I couldn't leave without speaking in defense of both a business model and change as a 40-year journalist. I will say that without money there is no mission. It is that simple in today's society.

But I really want to ask a very minor question about change because I think I saw a small sign of just how much the tradition of the world has changed in journalism. If you saw the cover of "The Week in Review" in *The New York Times* yesterday, there was a Leonhardt piece that was really

a deconstruction of what do we do about deficits and what do we do about revenue that was an interactive game. You could color in blocks there and make choices about how to both raise revenue and decrease the deficit. Or you could go online and do it, which I am certain that many thousands of people have done.

I would like to ask David and Bill whether you think that serves democracy more than the 150-word treatise on the deficit.

Mr. King: Those kind of interactive exercises are extremely helpful. And it reminds me of something that was done in Indiana about 20 years ago around redistricting in which there was a large-scale experiment that went on in middle schools and high schools where they were given maps and said, okay, redistrict.

And people saw how it happened, and it had a clear impact on how the state actually redistricted in Indiana. Similar programs were then done in Iowa and these were largely led by local media. So these kinds of interactive exercises, especially around the debt which is a true long-term crisis for this country, can be very helpful if then people express to elected officials what kinds of hard choices they are willing to accept. When people aren't willing to accept hard choices, we're not going to get anywhere.

Ms. Milligan: The one thing we haven't really talked about here is actually how all this is happening against a backdrop of people losing faith in so many fundamental institutions, whether it's Wall Street or government or media, or for that matter the Catholic Church. And we are talking about these changes as though they are not going to threaten the mission, but some of them do.

Technology is great and people can communicate, can be interactive and so forth. It can deliver the news better. What is worrying me is that the technology and the campaigning are starting to overtake the institution so that the missions of the institutions are being discredited. You see that in the media.

The problem that I have with Rachel Maddow—for example, talking about how this is kind of the new world of the media, people getting their information from opinionated people, their very smart opinions—is that it started to infect the print world with this branding of reporters, that the reporter is more important than the story being told. And that's where you get a lot of people not writing about policy because it becomes you and your snarky little take on something.

It is really astonishing to me how often I talk to young reporters and this whole idea that what we all grew up with—that journalism means comfort the afflicted, afflict the comfortable—they think is just the most bizarre thing. It's all about just the snide little comment. And there is not

this sense that the mission of journalism is bigger than they are and it is going to be here hopefully long after they are dead.

Right now I don't see as many people who have the sense that Congress itself, the whole idea of a democratic government, is bigger than they are. It was there before they were alive and it is going to be there after they are dead. And that's actually what concerns me.

Mr. Jones: We have come to the end of our time. I want to thank all of the panelists. Again, Bill Greider, congratulations on the Nyhan Prize. I want to say a particular thanks to the Shorensteins. I am very glad that you all were able to be with us. We miss your father. And I know that if he had been present at this he would have had his two cents to say about it, no doubt. We are very glad to have you all with us. I hope that you will come to other Shorenstein Center events. These are issues that are very important to our country. Thank you very much and we hope we will see you again. (Applause)