Theodore H. White Lecture *on* Press and Politics

with

Mark Halperin *and* John Heilemann

and the awarding of the

David Nyhan Prize for Political Reporting

***to* David Rogers**

2014

HARVARD Kennedy School
SHORENSTEIN CENTER
on Media, Politics and Public Policy

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The Theodore H. White Lecture commemorates the reporter and historian who set the standard for modern political journalism and campaign coverage. White, who began his career delivering *The Boston Post*, entered Harvard College in 1932 on a newsboy's scholarship. He studied Chinese history and oriental languages. He witnessed the bombing of Chungking in 1939 while reporting on a Sheldon Fellowship. In 1959, White sought support for a 20-year research project, a retrospective of presidential campaigns. After fellow reporters advised him to drop the project, White took to the campaign trail, and 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 served on the Visiting Committee at the Kennedy School of Government; he was one of the architects of the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy.

Mark Halperin

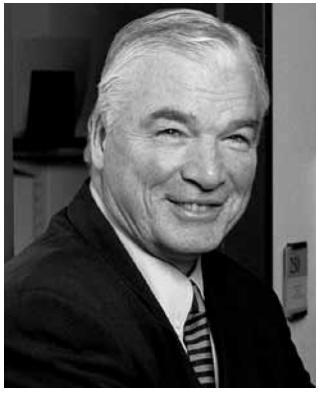
John Heilemann

Mark Halperin and **John Heilemann** are managing editors of Bloomberg Politics and hosts of Bloomberg TV's "With All Due Respect." They are best-selling co-authors of *Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, Palin and McCain, and the Race of a Lifetime* and *Double Down: Game Change 2012*.

Prior to joining Bloomberg, Mark Halperin was an editor-at-large and senior political analyst at *Time* magazine. He is a graduate of Harvard College, and was a joint Fellow at the Institute of Politics and the Shorenstein Center in 2007.

John Heilemann came to Bloomberg from *New York* magazine, where he served as national affairs editor and columnist. Heilemann is a graduate of Northwestern University and received an MPA from Harvard Kennedy School in 1990.

David Rogers has covered Congress for more than 30 years and joined the staff of Politico in January 2008. He was drafted and sent to Vietnam and served as a combat infantry medic in 1969. He went on to work for *The Boston Globe* where he covered City Hall before being assigned to cover Washington in 1979. He was recruited by *The Wall Street Journal* in 1983 to report on Capitol Hill, and was regarded as "the gold standard for congressional reporters." Rogers is a graduate of Hamilton College (1968) and the Harvard Graduate School of Design (1973).



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.

Theodore H. White Lecture on Press and Politics

December 1, 2014

Mr. Jones: Welcome to you all. I am Alex Jones. I'm Director of the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, and it's my great pleasure to welcome you to this very special evening for the Shorenstein Center. Each year, this night is really a highlight for the Shorenstein Center, which in 2014 is marking its 28th birthday.

As some of you already know, the Shorenstein Center was founded in 1986 as a memorial to Joan Shorenstein Barone, a truly remarkable television journalist who died of breast cancer after a distinguished career. Her father, Walter Shorenstein, endowed the Center as a place for focused and searching examination of the intersection of the media, politics and public policy. Walter was, above all else, a great citizen, and the Theodore White Lecture and the David Nyhan Prize are to recognize that same kind of engaged activist citizenship, but from a journalist perspective.

A bit later you will hear from our Theodore White Lecturers for 2014, Mark Halperin and John Heilemann, but first I have another task to perform which is also an honor. In 2005 we established the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism in memory of our friend and former fellow. David Nyhan was a man of many parts. He was an Irishman with an instant charisma and a killer smile. As a Shorenstein Fellow, he created a kind of glow.

Tonight we honor another aspect of David Nyhan, that of consummate political reporter, which is the role that occupied much of his life and at which he could not be bested. David was a reporter and an editor, and then a columnist at *The Boston Globe*, and his work had both a theme and a 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, and yet he loved politicians. Well, let me amend that. I think the current political morass would have sent him into a frenzied rage, but that was also part of who he was. But he was always surprising his readers with his take 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, his brother Chris and sister Margo, and I would like to ask all the Nyhans to please stand. (Applause)

He's always pushing the envelope. Half the people in city hall are mad at him. He just doesn't take no for an answer.

This year's David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism is awarded to David Rogers, and therein lies a tale because David Nyhan and David Rogers worked together for a time at *The Boston Globe*. This tale of two Davids comes courtesy of Marty Nolan, another consummate political journalist who was there. This is the way Marty tells it:

At the other end of Massachusetts Avenue, on the Dorchester-Roxbury line, is a bar and grille called the Venetian Garden. It's not really Italian nor a garden, but for decades it was favored by workers at the electric utility company, the city morgue and *The Boston Globe*. One evening in the late 1970s, Marty and David Nyhan were watering at the Venetian Garden. (Laughter)

David was *The Globe's* new city editor and Marty, the Washington bureau chief, and Marty was thinking of recruiting a new correspondent for the Washington Bureau. The person he had in mind was David Rogers, who worked for David Nyhan covering city hall. Marty said he was impressed with Rogers, who he found to be diligent, prolific, not afraid of work. "No, no," countered Nyhan, "He's always pushing the envelope. Half the people in city hall are mad at him. He just doesn't take no for an answer." And when Marty observed that this sounded exactly like the young David Nyhan, Nyhan responded in pained anguish, "You don't understand. David Rogers has no respect for authority." (Laughter)

It turned out this was typical Nyhan mischief. Nyhan just didn't want to lose Rogers, and when Marty called Nyhan on his effort to try to kill the recruitment, Nyhan flashed that killer smile and said, "Worth a try, right?"(Laughter)

It's not hard to understand why David Nyhan wanted to keep David Rogers. David Rogers is a reporter's reporter, and he has covered Congress for 30 years for *The Globe*, *The Wall Street Journal* and now Politico. And he has done it with a kind of rugged, personal integrity that has long been who he is. He was a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War but agreed to be drafted as a medic because, in his words, he "couldn't get around the idea that if I didn't go, someone else down the street would have to." He served as a combat medical corpsman with the 1st Infantry in 1969, was wounded and twice cited for valor.

His coverage of Congress has been rooted in a staggering work ethic and a belief that people need to know what goes on behind closed doors,

what is in legislation and how the sausage of governance is actually made. He is known for asking one more question, making one more phone call, and he is also known for getting it right. David Shribman, his colleague and now editor of the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, who covered Congress with David Rogers, said of him, "He was the best reporter I have ever known." It is my honor to introduce this year's winner of the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism, David Rogers. (Applause)

Mr. Rogers: Thank you. When Alex first called in July, I was surprised, and I'm still surprised. But I'm also grateful and I want to thank everyone responsible in the Nyhan family, for what's a very nice honor and a homecoming of sorts, because it was here at the design school where I first met my wife Rebecca, who fully shares in this award after putting up with me all this time. It was here Robert Manning published me, which was a huge break at the time. It was here *The Globe* hired me 41 years ago, and soon after came David Nyhan, as it worked out via Wilbur Mills and Fanne Foxe. (Laughter)

The Center's given this prize before to a string of Pulitzer winners, people who wrote big books, not to mention the famous Nat Hentoff. I'm none of that. But I'm certainly the first who'd not only worked alongside David Nyhan but also, as Marty said, under David Nyhan, and those are two, very different experiences, which David was surely laughing about tonight.

I will always owe the *Perth Amboy Evening News* for giving my start, but it was *The Globe* where I got my legs and the chance to do politics and eventually Congress. You have to understand, I was still pretty fresh then from Vietnam. That was a violent and very isolating year, and I think more than people realized, there were huge gaps in my knowledge of what happened anywhere else in the world in 1969.

The Globe sat me in the city room across from Bob Englund, who became my teacher. Bob drank a bit at the same Venetian Garden, put his cigarettes out on *The Globe* carpet and thought he'd seen it all, until the new kid leaned over one day and said, "What's this thing called 'Chappaquiddick'?" (Laughter)

It's hard to do justice to the look of pain and agitation that crossed Bob's face. He rose suddenly, pulled me to a corner and whispered fiercely, "Don't ever let anyone at *The Globe* hear you say that again." (Laughter)

Vietnam had left me too, as Marty hinted, stuck with a bit of an authority problem. David Nyhan did share this view. Soon after becoming my boss, he called me down from city hall to announce my story's lead was "dog shit." (Laughter)

I always marveled that the conversation never went beyond that, it was just "dog shit." There was a new sheriff in town, and I was on notice.

Things got better, of course, and David and I survived the '79 elections [sic]. He supported my move next to Washington, Tip O'Neill signed off on me, and I think that was what was most important of all.

But the real story was this, as Marty's already hinted, if I had an authority problem, so did David. Neither of us were managers. We were reporters, and that's what drew us together into what became a very nice, respectful relationship that ran long past our ties to *The Globe.* David used to say to me about *The Globe*, "It's their bulldozer, but we get to drive it." The accent was on "their" and "drive."

David used to say to me about *The Globe*, "It's their bulldozer, but we get to drive it."

It's no secret that *The Globe* had its own Irish Yankee split then. On this subject, I'll never forget meeting Ben Bradlee when *The Post* made a run at me to come over and cover Congress for them. It was there at the time when Tom Winship was ending his famous run as *The Globe's* editor. Bradlee wanted only to talk about who might replace his friend. The answer seemed obvious to me. I cheerfully predicted it would the likes of Jack Driscoll or Marty Nolan. Bradlee looked at me as if I was born yesterday. "The 'Harps' will never run that newspaper," he said. (Laughter)

Harps? I hadn't heard that in a while. I was stunned. "Yes, we will," I said, and I walked out.

Of course, Bradlee knew better than I at the time, but if anything, all this just reinforced David's second point, driving the bulldozer. And drive is what David did. He was the cobbler's friend, wearing out shoes covering impeachment in the '70s. A decade later, on assignment in London, my *Wall Street Journal* friend Jim Perry remembers Nyhan arriving from Boston to cover the British elections. The British hacks have never seen anything like Nyhan, Jim told me. He was so big and loud and funny, and he could drink any of them under the table. (Laughter)

They followed him around awestruck like little acolytes. "I was just along for the ride," Jim said, the big American's friend. Looking back now, I've worked for a lot of different bulldozers, a small city county paper in New Jersey, a big, regional paper in *The Globe*, the bigger, national paper in *The Journal*, and for these past seven years, helping to establish Politico, to which I will always owe a great deal for giving me a fresh chance after the Murdoch buyouts. I still don't tweet, but there's a fair cross section of American newspapers. (Laughter)

In that time, I've covered Congress for 35 years. You could argue that shows a certain lack of imagination. For me, Congress has always been the big river through which information flows if only you will take the time

to pound the halls to hunt it. The people there can make you laugh or cry, but few places are better to learn about America, whether it is covering laws or food stamps, who has a lawyer or who doesn't in the immigration courts, what do the numbers in the appropriation bills really mean on the ground. In Vietnam, we called it "RIF" Recon in Force. The choppers would drop you for short stints, pick you up, drop you again. It was a medic's nightmare because you had to travel light and choose what bandages to bring and what not. But more than you think, it has all stayed with me in Congress. Reporting, for me, is infantry. I'm ill now, but for eight years I walked miles every day in the Capitol, looking for members, hunting clerks. As the sun went down, I even joked that the House and Senate seemed to come alive, not unlike the war.

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David Nyhan and I were different people, but reporting, wearing out shoes, trying to shed some light around the corner is what was both understood and shared. That's what he was about, that's what this night is about, and with these memories I thank you again very much. (Applause)

Mr. Jones: Theodore H. White was a newsboy who became a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and who changed both political journalism and politics when he wrote *The Making of the President* in 1960 about the Kennedy-Nixon campaign. For the first time, he raised the curtain on the warts of all sides of presidential campaigns and changed campaign coverage forever. Ever since Teddy White, insider candor and behind-the-scenes drama have been a staple of campaign coverage. He followed the first book with three more *Making of the President* books in 1964, '68 and '72.

This year, the White Lecture is to be delivered by two of Teddy White's heirs as consummate, political reporters, Mark Halperin and John Heilemann. It was very much in the Teddy White tradition that they wrote their two, best-selling books on the last two presidential campaigns. First, *Game Change*, which told the story of Barack Obama's victory in 2008, and may be the only campaign book to be turned into a movie that went on to win five Emmys, three Golden Globes and a Peabody Award. They then followed that up with *Double Down*, which was another riveting account, this time of the 2012 campaign. They are now co-managing editors of Bloomberg Politics, which leads Bloomberg's political and policy coverage, and which includes hosting a daily, live television show they wryly named *With All Due Respect*. That title prompted John McCain, one of their first

guests, to declare the title, "The greatest contradiction I have ever heard in my life." (Laughter)

John Heilemann has pointed out that the title isn't "With All Respect," with all respect that is due. The program sets out to fuse popular culture, the political world and TV. It has included such stunts as having Nancy Pelosi taste four kinds of chocolate ice cream. An early and anonymous critic of the show, identified only as a "prominent, Republican strategist," said of it, "I think I need to be consuming marijuana-laced comestibles in order to understand this concept."

By the way, at 5:00 p.m. this afternoon, they did *With All Due Respect* here at the Kennedy School, and among other things on the show, they put up a video of Michelle Obama dancing with a turnip, (Laughter) the favorite video of their guest, who is the president of *The Harvard Lampoon*. The point is that they have been given permission to experiment with political coverage in a fraught and fast changing environment both in politics and in media.

Both Halperin and Heilemann cut their teeth on more traditional, political journalism. Before joining Bloomberg this year, Halperin had served as editor-at-large and senior political analyst for *Time*, covering politics, elections and government for the magazine and for Time.com. He also created The Page for Time.com, an online news and analysis tip sheet reporting on current political stories, campaign ads, TV clips, videos and campaign reactions from every news source along with his own analysis. Before that, he was at ABC News for nearly 20 years where he covered five presidential elections, and he was a joint fellow at the Institute of Politics and at the Shorenstein Center in 2007.

John Heilemann, who is a Kennedy School graduate, was national affairs editor for *New York* magazine and NewYorkMag.com where he wrote The Power Grid column in print and the In Politic column online, where he treated politicians with his fabled "all due respect." He was a staff writer for *The New Yorker*, *Wired* and *The Economist*, and his first book *Pride Before the Fall*, about Bill Gates and the Microsoft antitrust trial, was named by *Business Week* as one of the best books of 2001.

Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin and the Race of a Lifetime, that's the full title, became a *New York Times* number one best seller, and a team was born. They became regulars on *Morning Joe* where they continued to pay all due respect, and when Bloomberg offered them the opportunity to do their work across all platforms with plentiful resources and a lot of room to try different things, how could they say no?

Tonight, you will hear from both of them. It is my pleasure to present for the first time the joint Theodore White Lecturers, Mark Halperin and John Heilemann. (Applause)

Mr. Heilemann: Alex, thank you for that gracious introduction. You read it just like we wrote it. We appreciate that. (Laughter)

I happen to know Alex is a big fan of *With All Due Respect*. He told us that beforehand, and I don't think he was just pandering, and his mention of marijuana-laced comestibles makes me wonder, Alex, about your viewing habits, whether that's one of the reasons why you're such a fan of the show (Laughter).

But I won't make any insinuations. Mark and I give a lot of speeches around the country, we talk to a lot of groups, and usually when we start, when I speak first, I come up and I say that we're really thrilled to be in the place where we are and it's a great honor to be addressing the crowd, and the crowd is obviously the most brilliant, distinguished and good looking set of people we've ever addressed, then I say, "I've never said to any crowd before," and people laugh. This time, I actually mean it. (Laughter)

We really are honored, incredibly honored, to be here because of the fact that we both are alumni of this institution, broadly speaking. Mark as an undergraduate of Harvard, and me as a graduate student in this building. This is one of those things that I remember, going to Teddy White Lectures when I was a young, young man, and the idea that we would ever be – or that I would ever be – in a position to give one was kind of unthinkable at that time, and so to be here today really is an incredible honor and almost kind of breathtaking and hard to get my head around. So thank you for the honor, and congratulations to David, who really is a role model for so many people in our business for all of the reasons that Alex laid out.

I'm going to talk not for very long. One of the things that is problematic about doing a joint Teddy White Lecture is that there are two of us, which means we've been placed under very significant time constraints, and I normally try to fill talks with long jokes and a lot of stories and stuff. I'm not going to be able to do that. I actually had to sacrifice all the gratuitous profanity from my speech, which is one of the trademarks that I like to bring to public speaking, so I'm a little disappointed about that.

I'm going to talk not really about any of the things that you might expect me to talk about. I'm not going to talk about campaigns. I'm not going to talk about politics. I'm mostly going to talk about technology in our business, and Mark is going to talk about campaigns. The title of our speech was "Optimism for a Change: Media Campaigns in 2016." I'm going to focus on the media piece of that and kind of fly up at 30,000 feet.

For me, optimism is not a change. I have been unreasonably optimistic since I started my career in this business, I think mainly because I have been incredibly fortunate to work in some kind of extraordinary places. Alex ticked them off. I started out my professional career at *The Economist* magazine, and I worked for three other old-line magazines, at *New York*

magazine, *The New Yorker*, and those places, all have met the challenges of the modern technological age in our business, which have proven really daunting for a lot of media operations. They met them pretty well, and in most of the places that I worked, when I worked with the editors and the publishers, they faced these great challenges that I'm about to talk about in a moment – with a lot of fortitude and creativity, and being in those environments allowed me to remain optimistic about the business.

I have been unreasonably optimistic since I started my career in this business, I think mainly because I have been incredibly fortunate to work in some kind of extraordinary places.

But what I really want to talk about is the time that I spent at *Wired* magazine, which gets to the heart of the technological elements of where our business has been recently and where I think it's going in the future, and why there is in fact a cause for optimism. I was not that long out of this institution in the early part of 1993, when *Wired* magazine was first started, and I remember quite vividly being in an apartment in Paris. A friend of mine had been in the United States and brought back the first issue of the magazine, and I opened it up and read this letter from the editor and founder of the magazine, Louis Rossetto. It was an open letter to the inaugural issue, and it started with a sentence that said, "Why *Wired*? Because the digital revolution is ripping through our lives like a Bengali typhoon." And then it went on to describe a magazine that was not going to be about technology, but about how technology would affect everything in our lives, the economy, business, finance, science, culture, entertainment and politics. And it ended by saying that this magazine is really about "social changes so profound, their only parallel is probably the discovery of fire." It's possible that, like your Republican friend, it's possible that I was really, really stoned when I read that, but my first thought was, "Man, I want to work for that magazine." (Laughter)

And a couple years later I was there. Many people think about *Wired* – which was at that moment in the early 1990s kind of an avatar of change and of the future – many people think of it as a product of the Internet and a magazine that chronicled the Internet and the Internet culture and rose out of the Internet. It did many of those things, but it did not actually come out of the Internet, because there really was no World Wide Web when *Wired* started.

In January of 1993 when the magazine started, the web had been invented but was still an academic research project and there was no commercial web. The commercial web was not inaugurated until December

of 1994 when Netscape Navigator came out. Twenty years ago next week was when the actual commercial web came into being. Six months before that, *Wired* magazine, which did not have a website when it first started, because, like I said, there was no web, launched a web operation called Hotwired. Six months before there was a commercial web, there was a website at *Wired* in San Francisco.

That website, over the course of its first year, did all of the following things: It ran the first ad that ever was on the World Wide Web. It invented banners as a form of advertising that became the dominant ad form in the early web years. It was the first site to measure the effectiveness of online advertising. It was the first to attempt to do behavioral targeting on the web. It was the first to apply real-time web analytics. It invented the notion of a front door, or a home page, where there would be constantly changing, updated news at the front, rather than having something static – that everything would constantly be active and the thing would refresh itself automatically. It created the first, what I think of as the first, real blog of the blog era, a blog called Suck.com. Its name was indicative of its tone, and that tone of snarkiness and irony became pervasive in the web culture. Suck's motto was "A fish, a barrel and a smoking gun." I think you can see the connection to a lot of web culture in that. And then it started up a thing called The Netizen in 1996, which is where I went to work. It was the first time that anybody on the World Wide Web had ever deigned to cover a presidential campaign with dedicated resources, where people were not repurposing things that were in print and putting them online, but having actual reporters out on the trail writing native stories for the web. I was one of those people.

[Hotwired] invented banners as a form of advertising that became the dominant ad form in the early web years. It was the first site to measure the effectiveness of online advertising. It was the first to attempt to do behavioral targeting on the web. It was the first to apply real-time web analytics. It invented the notion of a front door, or a home page...

So that's a lot of innovation. It's kind of amazing to think about it, that Louis Rossetto, the guy who wrote the Bengali typhoon thing before there was a commercial web, was not shrinking from the notion of technological change and the web, and was not resisting it, and was not denying it but was instead embracing it. Louis' motto, which is kind of almost stupid

simple – and he put it on the cover of the magazine to mark its fifth anniversary – was "Change is good." Change is good.

I think it's fair to say that for most of the mainstream media at that time that their motto was not "Change is good." Their motto was something more like "Change is bad," and they greeted the web in exactly the opposite way that Louis did. They shrunk from it. They tried to deny it. They tried to resist it. It is the case that change is not always good. Change is in fact a complicated thing. Joseph Schumpeter was the famous Austrian economist who came up with the idea of creative destruction – equal emphasis on both those things, creation and destruction at the same time. And there's absolutely no doubt that in the beginning phases of the web that there was a lot of destruction in the worlds of traditional journalism. A lot of jobs were lost, and a lot of budgets were cut, and a lot of bureaus were closed, and a lot of ambitions were diminished. But I would say that the mainstream media in that period made the situation worse by trying to pretend like this was something that could somehow be avoided and would somehow go away.

I think it's fair to say that for most of the mainstream media at that time that their motto was not "Change is good." Their motto was something more like "Change is bad"... They shrunk from it. They tried to deny it. They tried to resist it.

I remember quite vividly being in New York in 2001, right after the NASDAQ had crashed in 2000, 2001, and it looked like the entire tech sector and all the dot com economy was falling apart, sitting with the editor of one of the biggest magazines in the country who literally said to me at that time, "Thank God this is over. It's over now." And I said, "What do you mean it's over?" And he said, "This whole Internet thing, it's over now. We don't have to worry about it anymore," and I thought, "Man, you really are not with the program," and, as we all know, it was not over and it has continued at a relentless pace.

Luckily for all of us, that was then and this is now, and we are in a very different world than we were 10 years ago, but there was a lost decade, I would say, in terms of mainstream media. Today in the news there were two stories that tell you a little bit about where we are now. David Carr wrote a column about *The New York Times* cutting another hundred jobs through their buyouts or layoffs. That is the destructive part of the creative destruction that is still going on. At the same time, I read a story on re/code about there being a new round of funding that was being injected into Vox, $46.5 million value in that company, which includes sites such as The

Verge on technology, SB Nation on sports, Curbed on food and fashion and Vox itself on public policy, valuing that company at $380 million. That is not an anomalous thing that's happening in our business right now. Just in the last few months, Business Insider, a web-only property: $12 million investment, $100 million valuation. BuzzFeed: a $50 million investment, $850 million valuation. It suggests something that was 10 years ago totally unthinkable, which is that hardheaded investors would not look at content and news as something to be steered clear of at all costs, but in fact as a reasonable business proposition, something that making investments in is attractive.

Marc Andreessen... wrote recently that he expected in the next 20 years for the size of the news industry to grow somewhere between 10x and 100x.

One of the guys who was most responsible for this world we live in is Marc Andreessen, who was the guy who wrote the first web browser and then wrote the first commercial web browser. Marc Andreessen, now a hugely successful venture capitalist in Silicon Valley, wrote recently that he expected in the next 20 years for the size of the news industry to grow somewhere between 10x and 100x. And the reasons were all very clear and very straightforward: Explosive growth in the addressable, global market. The developing world coming online on the Internet. The proliferation of cell phones creating five billion news consumers worldwide by 2020. The end of monopolies based on distribution, turning the news business into an actual business, and thinking about the business as if it were a business, which, in Andreessen's view, and I would say mine, is a good thing. The news business is in fact a business and is also a public trust, but it is a business and must survive as such. And also the proliferation of new business models and content forms and distribution channels. All of those things, the business models, things like premium and freemium conferences and events, crowdfunding, micropayments, philanthropy, all new sources for news – all being experimented with as we speak. The Andreessen argument is essentially that the news business will never host the big, the gigantic, the giants that it once had before, but that there really is space in this market for thousands and thousands of medium-sized, highly profitable news operations serving various distinct markets of an increasingly news-hungry, global audience.

There are, no doubt, some people in this room that will say that [argument] is too optimistic, that a 10x to a 100x growth over the next 20 years seems kind of crazy. And to that I would say you may be right – but Marc Andreessen is a lot richer than you and me. (Laughter)

And he got that way by making optimism a fundamental part of his investment strategy. He certainly downplays the pain that the business has gone through, and still will have to go through, as we go through this restructuring.

But when I look around at the new ventures and new content forms, when it comes to the coverage of politics and policy and public affairs, I see exciting, intriguing things everywhere I look. In addition to the aforementioned Vox and BuzzFeed doing ambitious reporting and analysis. And, yes, it is true, at BuzzFeed, you will notice mostly listicles and pictures of cats, but there is in the background a lot of serious journalism going on. You can also see Politico and Talking Points Memo and Vice all covering politics and policy from divergent angles with seriousness and vigor. I see old line newspapers like *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* finally seeming to have cracked the digital code and innovating like crazy on the web. I see Jeff Bezos buying *The Washington Post* for $250 million and investing in it like crazy, and the paper being better than it has been in many years. I see ProPublica and our friend Evan Smith at *The Texas Tribune* inventing and then thriving on the basis of a nonprofit journalism model.

But when I look around at the new ventures and new content forms, when it comes to the coverage of politics and policy and public affairs, I see exciting, intriguing things everywhere I look.

And then there's what Mark and I are doing at Bloomberg Politics. Now I make it a rule not to shill for endeavors that Mark and I are involved in. I will say however that *Double Down* is now available in paperback and it makes a fantastic holiday gift. (Laughter)

But I'll also say about Bloomberg Politics, and we'll talk about more of this in Q&A if you wish, that we're doing a big, bold, ambitious thing, a multiplatform, digitally-driven enterprise politics vertical with deep resources devoted to TV, digital, video and text reporting with news, analysis and longform storytelling.

Not all of these experiments that I've just listed will succeed. Some will fail. All may fail, although I certainly hope for our sakes that ours will not be one of them. But that is really kind of beside the point. The point really is that we are in a period now of protean experimentation. The period of the destruction part of creative destruction is a little bit more in the rear-view mirror, and we are now into the phase where there is more creativity. Creativity has ascended and destruction is on the wane, and that is good news for the news business.

Before I close, I want to come back to Louis Rossetto's point. He said "Change is good." I'd say there's one caveat to that, which is that change is good, but that doesn't mean that it isn't hard, and that brings me to the words of another great philosopher, the Dodgers' legendary former manager, Tommy Lasorda, who famously declared, "Nobody said this fucking job would be all that fucking easy." And now with great relief at having gotten in a little bit of gratuitous profanity, I want to thank you and hand it over to Mark. (Applause)

Creativity has ascended and destruction is on the wane, and that is good news for the news business.

Mr. Halperin: Thank you. I never met Teddy White, but I'm confident that if he were here with us this evening, the first thing he would say is, "Seriously? Another Bush versus Clinton? Really?" (Laughter)

As John said, it is an honor to be back here at Harvard and here in the forum at the invitation of the Shorenstein Center to give half of the Theodore H. White Lecture. It's an honor and for me a little bit of a surprise, frankly. One of my professors here at Harvard in whose class I did not do particularly well, said to me at the end of the semester, and I'm quoting him now, "It'll be a hot December day in Cambridge before you're ever honored by this university." (Laughter)

And you know what? He turned out to be exactly right. (Applause)

I want to thank Alex and everyone at the Shorenstein Center. I didn't meet Teddy White, but I did meet Walter Shorenstein a few times, and I can tell you what everybody who ever met him would tell you about him. He was a man of honor and intellect and compassion, and he wanted to make the world a better place, and he did, through the Center and through of a lot of the other things he did.

Just briefly about the Davids. The first presidential campaign I covered was in 1992, out in the field, and one of the most exciting things for me was spending time in New Hampshire with *The Boston Globe* reporters. And I know you all hear this all the time, but David, in a group of charismatic, veteran reporters who understood politics and life, stood out even amongst Curtis Wilkie and Mike Barnicle and everybody else, so I'm really honored to be here as part of this evening.

And David Rogers, when I worked at ABC News, I wrote a newsletter, and I referred to him as "The 101st Senator," and the only people that would complain were people who pointed out that David had significantly more power and integrity than most of the actual Senators. (Laughter)

I read every word he writes, and it's just an incredible honor for us to share the stage with him this evening. So, David, congratulations.

John talked about the media and the causes he has for optimism there as we head towards the 2016 cycle. I want to talk a little bit about campaigns themselves and how they work with the media. After that, we're going to take questions. As far as we're concerned, you can ask about whatever you want, nothing's off limits. You could ask about the details of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, or what John and I have learned about the Clintons covering their relationship for the last 25 years, whichever interests you more. (Laughter)

There's false outrage, a lot of "gotcha" journalism, there's dog whistle politics. It's all part of the quadrennial vaudeville show that my friend John Harris and I a few years ago dubbed "The Freak Show."

I've covered a lot of presidential candidates. Back in '88 really was the first one I covered as a researcher, and almost all of them lost. That includes Ross Perot, who complained that his daughter's wedding was disrupted by some Ninjas. It includes Gary Bauer, who fell off the stage in New Hampshire while he was flipping pancakes. It included John Edwards, who talked about two Americas while, unbeknownst to the rest of us, there were at least two John Edwards. (Laughter)

And it includes Michelle Bachman, who at one point on the campaign trail mixed up the home towns of the actor John Wayne and the serial killer John Wayne Gacy. (Laughter)

Now many of them, not all, but many of them, the losing candidates, elevated our political discourse, which is not easy to do. As you all know, there's a bit of a signal to noise problem in our presidential politics today. Politics has been pretty rough since the beginning of the republic, but over the course of our careers, and I'm sure this is just a coincidence, things have gotten rougher, there's no doubt by almost every measure. There's false outrage, a lot of "gotcha" journalism, there's dog whistle politics. It's all part of the quadrennial vaudeville show that my friend John Harris and I a few years ago dubbed "The Freak Show."

So tonight, I want to in my time here give you just a few suggestions that I've got for the bipartisan presidential class of 2016. Nothing I'll tell you is brand new. They're just best practices that over time have become over time less and less practiced – but I believe they're in the candidates' interests, the campaign's interest, the media's interest and, most importantly, in the national interest.

First, I'd say to campaigns and candidates in 2016, forget the flip-flop fetish. I can't think of another so-called third rail of American politics that causes more damage by people trying to avoid it than it would cause ben-

efit if people would just embrace it. Everywhere else in the world, when people change their mind, they have some thoughtful, self-aware views and opinions, they change, they evolve, they come to a different conclusion. They get new information. They make some new analysis. Sometimes they just have an honest change of heart. All those are completely legitimate reasons to switch your public position, even if it's 180 degrees from what you felt in the past or what you said in the past. The best candidates, the ones who are most human, the ones with the most potential to be successful presidents, will be unafraid to say when they change their mind. So that's my first piece of advice. Be honest about what you believe and why, and if you change your mind, be unafraid. Ignore the opposition researchers who will send out attacks by email. Laugh off the press' obsession with any change in position. Slip on your flip-flops – stand tall, rather, be true to your convictions and trust that the public will appreciate your honesty, because most of the time, they will.

That brings me to my second suggestion to the candidates. Don't worry if some people don't like everything that you say. Be who you are. Say what you believe. Recognize that if you say something, anything, as opposed to bland, sanded-down nothing, some people won't like it, but others will. And don't sweat it when the media starts to trumpet headlines saying that the Democratic Club of Benton County, some state, is calling for you to apologize. John McCain, when he was a successful presidential candidate, organically behaved this way, of saying what he really thought, of being open, and it served him really well. And when he dropped that mode, for a variety of reasons, the impact was very dramatic and to his detriment.

Of all the challenges that face Secretary Clinton, if she does decide to run, I think this is probably the biggest one. She and every other potential candidate need to embrace exposure, embrace the randomness of life, and of the campaign trail and of humanity. Sincerity right now is the biggest trump card in our politics, and if you can come by it honestly, you can lap the fields. Talk to voters in real town halls. Talk to people in the press. If something goes wrong, just deal with it, and remember you don't need a hundred percent of the vote to win.

Sincerity right now is the biggest trump card in our politics, and if you can come by it honestly, you can lap the fields.

Third, reward news organizations that behave responsibly, and punish those that don't. Now, some of you might be surprised to hear a reporter suggest that campaigns ever retaliate against news organizations, but it doesn't help anybody involved in this process to have unprofessional

behavior continue without consequences. To be clear, I don't think any news organization should face retribution from a campaign simply for tough, fair coverage, but what I do think is that if a news organization engages in bad practices like willfully violating source agreements, or failing to ask a campaign for comment before publishing a story, or shows ideological bias, then a campaign should react with clarity and a decisive response. And news organizations should avoid reflexively defending their colleagues if they don't know the facts and if their colleagues have in fact failed to uphold professional standards.

For the great bulk of journalists who behave ethically and responsibly, campaigns should reward them with real access – not create a cult of personality simply around the candidate but give access to the candidate, the candidate's family, friends, and most of all, the senior policy and political people around the candidate. Part of our problem of late is that we get to know no one around the potential president, and it's a corollary to saying what you believe and not worrying too much about who will disagree. Another way to create a direct connection between the American public and a potential White House staff and Cabinet is to give the country access through the press to the insight that people around the potential president are going to have.

Political reporters following a campaign every day are always going to frame policy announcements in terms of politics. They're going to focus on motives and positioning, things like that. So if you're going to make a major policy announcement, have a plan to reach out to the expert, beat reporters and columnists...

Fourth, remember that all beats are not created equal. Political reporters following a campaign every day are always going to frame policy announcements in terms of politics. They're going to focus on motives and positioning, things like that. So if you're going to make a major policy announcement, have a plan to reach out to the expert, beat reporters and columnists and brief the heck out of them in advance of the policy speech. If you've got a serious proposal on deficit reduction, call David Rogers and walk him through it. If it's a serious proposal, you'll get a lot more credibility having David Rogers write about it than a political reporter. If you've got a detailed, national security plan, call somebody like David Ignatius and brief him on it. Again, if you've got a serious proposal, that's smarter than just letting it be covered as politics.

Finally, the fastest and best way to end the freak show is to call it out when your own side shows up to perform. It's easy if you're a Republican to call out a Democratic freak show statement and vice versa, easy for a Democrat to do that on the Republican side, but it's a lot more meaningful and a lot more powerful if people call out their own side. Now I'll give you an example, not to pick on Governor Romney, although I have found doing that at Harvard usually gets a pretty good response for some reason. Don't laugh. He might be your next president. In 2012, Rush Limbaugh said some outrageous things about a Georgetown Law student, and it was so outrageous that he lost some sponsors over it, and so outrageous that Rush Limbaugh actually apologized for what he said. Governor Romney, asked repeatedly, refused to repudiate what Limbaugh said, even though I'm pretty confident that Governor Romney thought those comments were outrageous.

Finally, the fastest and best way to end the freak show is to call it out when your own side shows up to perform.

In 2016, we should change that. When someone on the right says something completely outrageous about, say, Hillary Clinton, the leading Republican candidate should denounce it proactively and not grudgingly, not say something like, "I wouldn't have phrased it quite that way," but really denounce it, and when that happens, people on the left, including the Democratic presidential candidate, should praise them for speaking out, and vice versa. Throw away the calculations about who will like it and who will not. Just say what you believe.

Now, none of this is part of a magic potion that's going to cure everything, but all of it will help. And let's face it, the freak show's had a pretty good uninterrupted run for decades now, because the campaigns keep performing in it, the media keeps rebroadcasting it, and much of the public keeps applauding it. But if the major candidates and the campaigns take my suggestions on board and the media gives them credit for it instead of criticism, we'll have a bunch of happier warrior candidates, a group of happier voters and even some happier reporters. Now that would be positively freaky, but in a good way. Thank you. (Applause)

From the Floor: Hi, my name's Ben, and I'm a Harvard alumnus. In Australia, there's a much higher voter turnout because there's a requirement for folks to turn out to vote. In America, we're comfortable doing online banking. People are comfortable filing their taxes online, yet the voting process seems to be rather antiquated. It's one day, and it's not always accessible for a variety of people. What are your thoughts on the

potential of modernizing the voting process to make it more of a 21st century experience, and how will that affect political dynamics?

Mr. Heilemann: I think doing everything short of compulsory voting to make voting easier for people would be a good thing, as long as we can maintain the integrity of the ballot, and there's obviously got to be as many steps as necessary taken to make sure of that. There are a lot of people obviously who are concerned about voter fraud, even though there have not been very many actual, documented cases of voter fraud, but the notion that the ballot must have its integrity is obviously hugely important. The notion that we now do a lot of voting by mail in this last election, and in the previous cycles – we're seeing a lot more of that. I think that's a positive advance. I'd like to see election day be a national holiday to make it easier for working people to get to the polls. I think all those things would be for the good.

I think doing everything short of compulsory voting to make voting easier for people would be a good thing, as long as we can maintain the integrity of the ballot...

There should be an affirmative attempt to make it as easy as possible. I don't like the idea of trying to force anybody to do anything that they don't want to do, but I do like the idea of trying to make it as easy as possible. I spent a fair amount of time with someone, a cryptographer once, going through the complexities involved in online voting and trying to do actual electronic voting. It's really, really tricky and hard to do, to maintain the integrity of the ballot in that context and make it untamperable. But I think probably at some point – I don't mean in the near future, but in the long future – that is probably a piece of code that will get cracked and we'll end up doing that too.

From the Floor: I'm Brian. You talked about trying to end the freak show and things that campaigns could do differently, and while those are laudable, isn't the lesson of the last several elections that the freak show works? Whether it was Bush-Dukakis, Obama-Romney, Bush-Gore, Bush-Kerry, isn't one of the big takeaways that very aggressive, personal attack focused, negative campaigns at the expense of issues is a winning formula for politicians?

Mr. Halperin: Well, there's a difference between winning and being able to govern well. We've had three consecutive two-term presidents for only the second time in the history of the country, the first three in a row were at the beginning of the Republic, and while all three got reelected, the first one was impeached, and the other two are routinely called the worst president of all time by their opponents.

So I'd say three things about the premise of your question. One is the losers engaged in freak show politics in all those campaigns too. Now maybe they weren't as good at it, but they engaged in it too, so it doesn't mean just the winners do. Second is, again, I think there are things like the lack of faith in our institutions, including the government, to do the right thing, which has gone progressively down for a variety of reasons, not just the freak show, but that's contributed to it. But I think it does make it harder to govern. And the last thing is, we're not going to do away with negative politics. It's just not going to happen, and, again, we've always had that.

I think the important thing is to restore a political center where you have people in the middle who are willing to work out a compromise...the more the national town square is dominated by extreme voices on the left and the right, the harder it is for a candidate to do that.

I think the important thing is to restore a political center where you have people in the middle who are willing to work out a compromise and willing to socialize with and talk about solutions to the country's challenges with people in the other party, and the more the national town square is dominated by extreme voices on the left and the right, the harder it is for a candidate to do that. These last three presidents, all did a substantially better job of capturing the center than did their opponents. And I'd say, again, you could argue that the negativity that they ran on – because all three of them ran negative campaigns just like their opponents did – maybe have contributed to their inability to govern the way they wanted to. So it certainly helps you win, but it doesn't necessarily help you govern and it certainly doesn't uplift our politics.

From the Floor: Hi, there. My name is Natalie Brand. I'm a mid-career MPA here at the Kennedy School, and my background is in television news. In this era of experimentation, do you worry that there's a lack of quality control, and how do you get readers or viewers to reward the highest quality work that's being done, which doesn't seem to be happening right now.

Mr. Halperin: Are you saying that based on having seen our show or not having seen it? (Laughter)

Mr. Heilemann: Well, I think there's a challenge in all areas of journalism, not just broadcast journalism, that quality control is a factor. One of the big advantages of the old system – which is to say a small number of established institutions – was that because there was an ethic there and

there were best practices that had been developed over a period of time, you had a lot more internally enforced codes of quality control.

In this Wild West world – which I view mostly optimistically because I think that the market does, in the end, reward quality and punish falsehoods – in a lot of ways, the increasingly social nature of our media allows the whole world to correct a lot of the mistakes that are routinely made both in good and bad faith by journalists in various institutions.

I think that the market does, in the end, reward quality and punish falsehoods...

If you look at just television, if you think about what currently passes for television news, in a lot of settings there are obvious defects in both the broadcast television model, and for a lot of people who express discontent with the options that they have available to them on cable as well. And we are blessed in a lot of ways with a proprietor and an institution that cares mostly about quality, and about doing things that are of high quality, and different and differentiated from what other people do. We've participated in broadcast television, Mark for a lot longer than me, but in cable TV as well, and one of the things that we find as we go around the country and talk to people is a lot of frustration with what's on TV. So our core bet is that by trying to do things that are smart, ethical, rigorous, but experimental and fun, that we'll be able to find some number of people out there that have a high degree of frustration with what is currently on offer.

From the Floor: Good evening, I'm also a mid career student here at the Kennedy School and my question is to John. I'm really glad you brought up technology and its importance in disrupting the media industry, and you've said that most of the destructive part is behind us, looking towards more creative paths, and I'd like to challenge that on the basis of the rise of artificial intelligence and the emergence of a set of algorithms that seem to be capable now, and more so in the future, to replace to a certain extent the role of journalists.

Mr. Heilemann: You know, it's a serious question, and I don't really want to be dismissive about it, because there are obviously huge advances that are going on in the realm of AI, and one of the great fathers of that work is Ray Kurzweil, who was at MIT for a long time, someone whose work I've read. There is no doubt that we will at one point in our world get to AI. And again, I speak here as someone who is the ultimate spectator in this area with no actual technological knowledge whatsoever. It seems to me that it has been kind of a fleeting promise for a long time, and the people that I know who are the greatest believers in it tend to be people who put the timeline for it at a much more conservative time. Well, they're

very confident it will happen, but they're not very confident it will happen soon. When it does happen, that will create a new set of challenges, certainly for the news business and for a lot of other businesses, but hopefully I'll be dead by then, so I won't be worrying about it too much. (Laughter)

From the Floor: Hi, I'm Josh Darr. I'm a political science Ph.D. candidate at the University of Pennsylvania. Most of the success stories that you described are nationally framed news sources: Vox, Bloomberg, *New York Times*. What do you think might be the future of locally constructed political news in the online era, and what might be the political consequences if they fail to adapt?

Mr. Halperin: Well, John mentioned one that I'd urge you to look at both as a business model and also for its journalism. It's our friend Evan Smith who runs what they call *The Texas Tribune.* Having worked for *Texas Monthly* before, and Austin, like a lot of state capitals – Boston is something of an exception – had all, many, or most of the bureaus closed or cut back by statewide news organizations, very little local television news coverage of local government. Evan runs a nonprofit that raises money, has a huge press corps, and has largely a digital product, including a lot of video, and an events business that does very well. And I think his model's pretty good.

Particularly now, when if you're a local television station, you have to be in the text business, and if you're a local newspaper, you have to be in the video business.

You need owners who are willing to spend money. If you don't have a nonprofit model with contributors, you need owners who are willing to spend money for quality and hire reporters who care about news and content, know how to make it entertaining and accessible. Particularly now, when if you're a local television station, you have to be in the text business, and if you're a local newspaper, you have to be in the video business. If you're going to succeed, you have to be willing to invest in hardware. Part of why people at *The Washington Post* are so excited is they need the capital infusion, not just to hire good people, which they've done, but they need to be in the video business and they need to be in the business of expanding their footprint beyond just a local and regional paper. So I think that *The Texas Tribune* model is good.

There is a for-profit model, but again, to me, for whatever you're covering, whether you're national or local, you need to do the fundamentals, you need to invest in technology, you need to hire the best people, and you need to feel like you have a sense of mission to hold powerful interests accountable to the public interest and tell the stories of our time. Now

if you do that in the current environment, depending on what part of the country you're in, you might still not succeed, because people your age and young people in general are less interested in news and getting it in traditional ways.

...you need to invest in technology, you need to hire the best people, and you need to feel like you have a sense of mission to hold powerful interests accountable to the public interest and tell the stories of our time.

I think that institutional brands matter a lot, but individual brands matter a ton as well. I don't care where David Rogers works. I will find his work because I know it's going to be high quality, and I think part of why local television continues to do decently well in a lot of places is because they're much more about branding individual brands – because people are on camera – than a lot of text places are, and I think, again, *The Texas Tribune*, you look there, they've branded their individual people through video, but also through their events in a way that's really important to people. People want to know who they're getting their news from now more than ever, and that's why it's got to be part of any business model.

From the Floor: Hi, I'm Margo Howard. I am a journalist and a townie. In the movie business, writing partners are usually the way it works, but not in the news business. All I can think of are Evans and Novak. How did you two became a writing pair?

Mr. Halperin: Slip Woodward and Bernstein into your answer.

...institutional brands matter a lot, but individual brands matter a ton as well. I don't care where David Rogers works. I will find his work because I know it's going to be high quality...

Mr. Heilemann: Yeah, I was going to. (Laughter)

Mr. Heilemann: Yeah. You know, we came together in a moment of inspiration and happenstance. We'd known each other for a fair amount of time. In the 2008 presidential campaign, we started working on that. We decided to write the book very late. We had not planned to do it for a long time. We both were like many journalists covering that race and were sort of stunned by the extraordinary spectacle that was the Democratic nomination fight, and we were at it for many more months than we thought we would be. And relatively late in the spring, I believe

in about a six-week period before the Pennsylvania primary, I was able to get away for a couple days of vacation, and I spent most of that time skiing and thinking how crazy it was that no one was making a movie about this race, about Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.

I flew from the place I was skiing to Washington where I met Mark to go to a John McCain event in Annapolis, Maryland. He was doing his biography tour, he was going around to places that meant a lot to him in his life, and we went to that event and it was really was one of the most epically bad political events we had ever been to. We had gone there expecting there to be 30,000 screaming midshipmen, all these McCainiacks, and when we got there, it was at the football stadium and the entire stadium was empty and the backdrop was the empty field behind him, and there were like 12 people shivering in the cold in the seats. And the teleprompter ate one page of his script, and he didn't notice and he went right through, and truly, given the quality of a lot of McCain's speeches at that point, not very many people noticed at all, it was just kind of random and weird and incoherent. He was angry. And we got in the car, and I said, "This is what I'm talking about. Have you thought about maybe we should make a movie about this? It'll be like Fellini, given the way that event was. (Laughter)

"But we should make a movie," and Mark said, quite sensibly, as he often is very sensible, "Have you ever written a screenplay?" And I said, "No," and he said, "Well, that pretty much means we're not doing that." And I said, "Okay, okay, let's not do that. Let's do our play, let's do like a 'Primary Colors,' let's write a novel together, let's do that." And he said, "Have you ever written any fiction?"

And I said, "No, I haven't written any fiction." He said, "Okay, so next?" And eventually we cycled to the thing naturally that we actually thought we could do, which was to do a nonfiction, narrative account of the campaign, and really, that entire conversation took place between Annapolis, Maryland and ended on Capitol Hill, actually sitting in the shadow of the Capitol outside the C-SPAN studios, and by the end of about an hour conversation in the car, we thought, "You know? Maybe there's something we could do here – that the campaign book has been kind of written off, but this campaign is pretty special." And we thought we had an idea for how to do it that would work, and we were off to the races.

From the Floor: You talk about moving to the center and the sense of optimism, which I would love to share as well, but the overwhelming sense in America, as you said, was frustration. And so we see all these institutions, whether it's House and Senate caucus rules to fractionalize and ensure there's adherence, whether it's districting and redistricting,

whether it's money and how we, through social media, compartmentalize and raise money through proactive or attacking fundraising. So it seems like institutionally, we still are very much driving to a fractionalized sense of politics. So how do we overcome that?

Mr. Halperin: I mean of all the challenges the country faces, and this one comes up around the country all the time, this one's the easiest to fix. This could be fixed tomorrow. We just have to create different incentives for the politicians. Politicians react to incentives. The incentives they have now drive them towards the extremes. You're more likely to lose in a primary than in a general election in most districts and states. If you want to raise a lot of money, or get a cable TV show, or a radio show, or a book deal, you have got to cater to the extreme. If you cross over and try to compromise, you get punished by your caucus or your conference.

Politicians react to incentives. The incentives they have now drive them towards the extremes.

So how do we change the incentives? Well, voters can do it. Donors can help. Consumers of news can help. People in the news business can help. I think politicians have to lead to some extent, because some of them have to be brave enough to be willing to ignore the incentives and respond to different incentives.

I think a candidate with good skills doesn't need to raise $100 million or $1.5 billion to run for president. I think there's enough ways to get your message out now that if a Senate candidate said, "You know what? I'm not going to spend six hours a day at the Senate Campaign Committee Office making phone calls to raise money. I'm going to run and win with less money than my opponent," I think that would be a liberating thing and could set a good example. If you voted for something, or said something nice about the president or the other party, I think that could set a good example. It can happen. I tell donors in particular that they've got more influence than anybody, because if the incentives to raise money went towards compromise and consensus and reconciliation rather than the freak show, that'd be the quickest way to get the attention of the politicians.

But we can do this as a country, and it's not just because it'd be nice to get along – we could get an energy bill, and a deficit reduction, and immigration and education, we'd get all those things done. If you took the politics and the personalities out it, I think the President, Boehner and McConnell could get that done in 20 minutes each. But you can't get the personalities out of it right now, and I don't think you can anytime soon – but you can get the politics out of it if people are willing to vote for things that involve compromise.

In the current dynamic, and again, I wish I thought it was likely to change in this president's time in office – I don't, I hope it does – but in the current dynamic, most Republicans in Congress don't feel they can vote for anything the president's for, regardless of what's in the proposal, simply because he's for it. And if we're going to get anything done the next two years, Boehner and McConnell are going to have to go the White House for a signing ceremony and the president's going to have to give them a lot more of what they want than Harry Reid or Nancy Pelosi would like.

But we can do this as a country, and it's not just because it'd be nice to get along – we could get an energy bill, and a deficit reduction, and immigration and education, we'd get all those things done.

Like I said, it's more likely to happen with a new president, but I hope this president can find a way to do it. But it could happen tomorrow. It's not like solving the effects of climate change. It's not even like dealing with immigration. It could happen tomorrow, but we all need to, as we have interaction with politicians, send them different signals about what the right incentives actually are for them. And if you're a liberal, hug a conservative, and vice versa because the politicians will respond to the different climate, not just about fundraising, but the media climate and the interest group climate. We all just have to help contribute to that.

Mr. Jones: I want to again congratulate Mark and John for being our superb Teddy White Lecturers and David Rogers our Nyhan Prize winner. I want to remind you that all three of them plus others will be upstairs tomorrow, at nine o'clock to begin to talk about some of the things that have been mentioned tonight. They will be joined by Jill Abramson, former executive editor of *The New York Times*, and Kristen Anderson, cofounder of Echelon Insights and a current IOP Fellow. And I want to again welcome you all to that, hope you will be there and join us, and we are adjourned. Thank you very much. (Applause)

Theodore H. White Seminar on Press and Politics

December 2, 2014

Mr. Jones: This is part two of our Theodore White Lecture program for 2014, and we will address the themes raised last night before as a point of departure with our speakers, and also with some invited guests and participants.

I think you know everyone on the panel. There are two people I'd like to introduce just very briefly. Kristen Anderson is an IOP Fellow. She is the founder of Echelon Insights. I'm going to ask her to explain what Echelon Insights does. It's really very germane and interesting, that's one of the reasons we wanted her to be on this panel, because it's both media and politics in a very kind of digital, modern way.

Ms. Anderson: So Echelon Insights is an opinion research, data analytics and digital intelligence firm. We're trying to come up with new ways to study public opinion, where voters are at, and how to track what they're hearing, what they're finding persuasive. We've got things such as a big database of all of the ad buys that campaigns are making, and these are just some of the products in the first couple of months that we've started to roll out.

Mr. Jones: You're just a couple of months old?

Ms. Anderson: We launched right before I came up here for the Fellowship.

Mr. Jones: Well, you've got a lot of confidence in this, then. And to my left, to your right, is Jill Abramson, the immediate past executive editor of *The New York Times*, and my colleague there for years, and now a member of the faculty of Harvard University. Welcome.

There were two fundamental themes last night, it seems to me. One was the future of journalism, and the other is the future of politics, and I'd like to treat them separately if we can, and I'd like to start by asking you, David Rogers, how you responded to what John Heilemann said last night about the future of journalism, his optimism rooted in, without question, a very active, digital, innovative arena that is growing, but at the cost of something else. But how do you see it?

Mr. Rogers: All right. Well, I think my experience that probably is most relevant here is Politico. I came there really just a year after it started, so I've been there seven of the eight years of Politico. You have to remember we started ourselves really as a paper that would then be on the Internet.

The way it's all changing, it's a little like Alice's Red Queen, where you're sort of racing to stay ahead, and I think there is potential there. I would be cautious. You know, in our experience, we started with the paper, and we basically could survive as a paper because we were selling advocacy ads, and that's a particular situation in Washington that doesn't exist necessarily around the country. And so then we morphed over to the Internet.

...I worry when journalists talk about a brand...

I know from talking to VandeHei, he is constantly amazed. He's really become a businessman from being a journalist, and he's constantly amazed at how we all chase mirages, and the first mirage is: we get this many contacts, we'll be able to sell this, then we'll do this or we'll do that. When I say, "we," I mean the industry. I think that some of the optimism is sometimes exaggerated because you can make contact with people, but you're not necessarily then generating revenue for your base, and he's had to deal with that.

I do think one of the things that came up was the example of the Austin, ProPublica thing. There are a lot of empty statehouse press galleries around the country, and I know Politico was interested in expanding in that area, and I think that potentially is a big area. When I think of expansion, I don't necessarily think of Washington as much as I think state capitals around the country that I think you can set up. We're doing that in New York some. I think you've got a potential around the country of having more Internet news. You do need some overarching vehicle. You know it's not like you can just move into some town and set up a thing. So like Madison, you'd have to have some vehicle which you could sort of communicate to people with.

I think that I do wince a little bit about the branding. There was someone at Politico who announced he had a brand, you know what I mean? And I was so, "What are you talking about? You're a reporter. What do you mean you have a brand?" But that's part of why it's changing, and to that extent, I don't know.

Mr. Jones: Well, I think if anyone in political reporting has a brand, it's you. I mean in the sense that people –

Mr. Rogers: What I mean is you try to do your job best, but I think I worry when journalists talk about a brand, you know what I mean? You know you do the best you can, but you don't brand yourself.

I guess one last thing I would say too is I'm a great fan of *The New York Times* and everything it does, but I think sometimes when people look at Internet journalism they say, "Well, it's not *The New York Times*," and they sort of miss something in their life. Well, there are things that *The Times*

doesn't do. Like *The Times* did not cover the Farm Bill, all right? And let me just use the Farm Bill as an example with journalism. The Farm Bill is sort of central to America and central to Congress, but the fact is the regional press has collapsed. The regional press that used to cover the Farm Bill doesn't exist anymore. The national papers are more coastal and don't cover the Farm Bill anymore. People who cover the Farm Bill are paid newsletters, okay? That's what's really happening. With Politico, we have the same thing. We now depend, for a part of our income on Politico Pro, who are essentially selling the news almost like Bloomberg sells for what it does.

The Farm Bill is sort of central to America and central to Congress, but the fact is the regional press has collapsed. The regional press that used to cover the Farm Bill doesn't exist anymore. The national papers are more coastal and don't cover the Farm Bill anymore.

But the point is the irony of the situation. Some of the best ag reporters don't write for the farmer anymore. They write for newsletters that go to the lobbies. And the irony of the last Farm Bill, I think, was that probably the most accessible news for a farmer in America was Politico, and I don't say that braggingly, but the reality was if you were a farmer out in South Dakota or Nebraska, you couldn't get news on the Farm Bill without something like that.

Mr. Jones: Do you see any other David Rogers types out there doing this for the general public?

Mr. Rogers: What do you mean? I don't understand.

Mr. Jones: Well, I mean who was competing with you on coverage of the Farm Bill? I mean were the newsletters?

Mr. Rogers: Yes, yes. There were a lot of people. There were a lot of people who write about a topic like the Farm Bill who write behind paywalls, and the average farmer won't see that. I mean I ran into this. I would call someone, and they'd say, "Oh, we know who you are," do you know what I mean? I don't want to claim I was sweeping the farm sector, but the point is when they get up in the morning and check their futures contracts, they might go to Politico.

Mr. Jones: Jill, you were the one who had to decide the triage of what resources to use for what. How does a newspaper like *The New York Times* now address these kinds of problems like the Farm Bill?

Ms. Abramson: Well, I mean frankly, I don't think a lot of sleep is being lost – I'm not there anymore, but I'd predict at *The New York Times* – over coverage of the Farm Bill. I see the trend in political reporting,

unfortunately, away from the very detailed, substantive kind of reporting that David Rogers does to, basically, and I don't mean to insult our lecturers of last night, but the prevailing style now is to cover campaigns and politics like a sporting event. It's a battle, constant conflict, juicy, behind-the-scenes, colorful scooplets, which are, I am the first to admit, delicious, and I read them every morning, but substantive coverage of legislation in Congress isn't the kind of sexy reading that that is. I'm not embracing that view, but I think that's the prevailing reality.

Mr. Jones: John Heilemann, would you say that Jill has that pretty much right or not?

Mr. Heilemann: Certainly it's been the case that there's been too little coverage of policy in recent years, but I actually think the trend now is more in the direction of – as there is a proliferation of different kinds of outlets doing kinds of things – more and more places that are finding a benefit in going and trying to find a niche at doing exactly that kind of thing. I mean there's no doubt, if you looked up the trend in the last 20 years, that we would all agree that there's been too little substantive coverage of the details of pretty much everything, whether it's legislation or regulatory policy or whatever. There's been a classic complaint of people in the business. At the same time, I do think more recently you're starting to see people who are finding a niche in doing that kind of thing, whether it's doing policy explainers or digging deeply. And, you know, David's always made a career out of this. So we've always had David, and he's not alone in doing that kind of work and he's always been able to find prominent outlets for his work. And people prize those people and always have and I think will increasingly do that. As younger people stand into that, there is a now niche of detailed policy reporting that's coming into play.

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Mr. Jones: Well, that's interesting. Mark, you said last night that you read everything that David writes, as I recall, most everything he writes anyway. Do you see a lot of young people doing the kind of thing that David Rogers has sort made his hallmark?

Mr. Halperin: Almost none, and none at that level that David does it. You know, when David said what he said just now about individual brands, I felt guilty for what I said last night, partly guilty, but also attempted to create, I don't know if it would be news, but controversy by

disagreeing. You know, David's right, I'm sure, that farmers read his stuff now, but David should be significantly more famous than he is. And I think he would serve Politico well, and my perception of what would serve David well is different than what David's perception is, if more people knew who he was, which in the current age involves being on television and radio and having his picture appear with his work in a way that he's chosen not to do – and I respect him for it entirely.

The thing about David is, if you read his policy articles about, say, appropriations or the Farm Bill, he has a complete handle on the personalities he's writing about. One of the things that has impressed me throughout his career at *The Wall Street Journal* and before is he'll write a paragraph about a committee chair, a very compact paragraph that will tell you exactly what you need to know, about how personality is part of the legislative process. I don't know anybody I have read in my career, maybe a couple people, Johnny Apple was pretty good at it too, who captures the personality, the intersection between the personality and the policy in a way that David does.

My biggest complaint or concern now, and it's towards *The New York Times* for sure, is you've got a bunch of younger people, and everybody has to do their first stint on the Hill and their first time on a campaign, but I think the preponderance of people at *The Times* and a lot of people at Politico now, besides David, are inexperienced and not getting the kind of grounding that is required to eventually be like David Rogers.

Mr. Jones: David, why do you not want to be in television and have your picture with your work?

Mr. Heilemann: And if you decide you do and you want a manager… (Laughter)

Mr. Heilemann: I'm totally available for a very reasonable percentage.

Mr. Rogers: Now, I'm not good at that, you know. Well, there's much more to say than that. When I went to *The Wall Street Journal*, there was a period where Al Hunt tried to get me to do Washington Week. I would end up saying, "Mr. Duke" instead of "Paul," and so that didn't last very long (Laughter)

Mr. Heilemann: See, if I were your manager, I'd turn that into a thing. (Laughter)

Mr. Rogers: Right, I know. Look, I know what I'm good at and what I'm not good at, or I think I know it. I think what John said about how people can develop niches now, and that there's a market there for people to develop – there's two challenges. Basically, journalism, you can't forget you're in somewhat that entertainment business, you want people to read, okay? You can't just write. You don't write a policy paper. You have to write a story with some personality that people will read. And then I think

the second thing is the financial situation. That was where some of the better policy writing is behind paywalls, okay? So you're not really communicating to the larger, American public. You may be creating a very useful newsletter that somehow has some subscribers. In our situation, I think Politico Pro will tend to go out early to a certain environment, and then some of it will be posted on the website.

But in fact, I worry a little bit in our situation about if we leave all the policy to Politico Pro, and then we just do politics, you know what I mean? We really have to mesh those two. The challenge is to mesh the policy and the politics and do it with enough personality where people want to read it, and I think that'll always be the challenge, and then you have to make it pay.

...you can't forget you're in somewhat that entertainment business, you want people to read, okay? You can't just write. You don't write a policy paper. You have to write a story with some personality that people will read.

Mr. Heilemann: Wait just a second, if I can throw in two things to this conversation. An example that comes to mind, for instance, of someone who has gotten quite a lot of success and celebrity on some level, and now has received a lot of investment for what he's doing, is Ezra Klein, who I think made his reputation for a lot of people. And again, there are things that Ezra writes about and talks about that he has a lot less expertise on than what I'm about to say, but when he covered the health care law, his reputation was basically built over the notion of detailed policy reportage, and he managed to turn himself into a brand on that basis and now has a company that is receiving a lot of investment from a lot of smart investors who think that there's –

Ms. Abramson: David Leonhardt is –

Mr. Heilemann: Is another one, yes, and I'm not trying to say there aren't others. I'm just giving one example of someone who took policy nerdery and then turned that into a television persona, and now is running an operation that may or may not succeed, as I said last night, could fail, could succeed, who knows.

We at Bloomberg, part of Bloomberg Law, sponsors a thing called SCOTUSblog, which a lot of people know here. Lyle Denniston writes for that, and a bunch of law professors. I would say they probably have done the best, more detailed coverage of Supreme Court jurisprudence over the course of the last four or five years. They're not behind a paywall. It's true that they are part of the Bloomberg network, but they also get pushed out through the web through Bloomberg.com.

There are big trends, and then there are examples of countertrends, and to me it seems like these are examples of things where there is a large and hungry market or at least a substantial, hungry market for that kind of detailed stuff, and it's increasingly starting to get filled.

Ms. Abramson: John, would you agree, I think an interesting experiment going on in real time now is what Chuck Todd is trying to do with the *Meet the Press* program, which is in a way a roll the dice and try nerdom. He even has added a segment on data reporting which goes into some detail about polling and trends that I noticed is called, of all things, "Nerd Screen" when it comes on. (Laughter)

Ms. Abramson: But I mean I think he is trying to tiptoe towards or run towards making that program more substance based, and it will be interesting to see if the ratings reward him or not because, obviously, NBC at a certain point is going to want to see the dollars roll in.

Mr. Jones: Kristen, I want to get you into this conversation. What do you see in this data area, and how does this affect how you would approach doing what you do?

Ms. Anderson: So I think the rise of data journalism is fascinating because it's requiring traditional journalists to have more comfort with data, with polling, with statistics when they do their reporting. I think you've particularly seen the rise of things like charts and graphs on sites like FiveThirtyEight, Vox, because it's an easy way to share something that makes someone's point.

...you now have folks who are looking for news that goes along with their world view. If I'm center-left, I can go to Vox and I can have data that proves to me that I'm right. And if I'm center-right, I can go to something like The Daily Signal and I can get data that proves that I'm right.

Sort of a reaction to last night in terms of the optimism about where journalism is headed, I have a bit of pessimism in that something that I'm deeply concerned about is the fragmentation of journalism, where you now have folks who are looking for news that goes along with their world view. If I'm center-left, I can go to Vox and I can have data that proves to me that I'm right. And if I'm center-right, I can go to something like The Daily Signal and I can get data that proves that I'm right. And so what's been fascinating is you have data journalism, which is supposed to be very rooted in fact, and you have many sites, even ones that do have some of an ideological lean that are very good at it – but even nowadays,

because of the Internet and the plethora of sites people can go to, you can find your own facts that back up your own world view.

Mr. Jones: Mark, how do you respond to that? Does that comport with what your sense of the world is out there that is consuming journalism?

Mr. Halperin: Well, there's a lot of it that is phony because it's statistics for statistics' sake. The most obvious example from the midterms is the sites that purported to have statistical models telling you the percentage chance someone had to win a particular race, and this notion that someone had a 78 percent chance of winning, and then the next day it was 75 percent, and you saw candidates who were given chances of winning above 90 percent who lost, and it's mostly garbage in and garbage out because they're basing their models on things that don't actually comport to the real world.

And I think it's great that now we have the tools to do them, and not just to crunch the numbers but, as it was said, to display them in a way that's visually appealing. I'm very interested in things like looking at campaigns' fundraising, campaign spending, demographics. I think it's fascinating to look, for instance, at the states the Democrats have won five or six cycles in a row that add up to 242 electoral votes. I think it's fascinating to look at the margins each of those times and to see the chances Republicans have of winning a state that they've lost, and overcoming a seven point margin, say, from the last cycle. I think there's a lot of ways in politics and in government you can do that, but I think the things that have gotten the most attention and the things that have popularized this notion of government politics coverage being data-driven are junk, and they've given the thing a bad name and crowd out better projects.

Mr. Jones: Well, if there was a moment when data became sexy, it was Nate Silver at *The New York Times* handicapping the presidential election of 2012. Do you see that as junk in, junk out, or how do you look at something like that, which turned out to be prescient? I mean the Republicans certainly did not accept his analysis, but was it just that he happened to get it right because he was lucky, or is there something there, that is embedded in the data, that is going to be something that is both predictive and something that can be manipulated?

Mr. Halperin: Just averaging public polls. So, you know, public polling, it's good. You average it, it turns out to be right. When he tried to do things on the World Cup, he was less successful. But I don't think somebody's a genius who can average public polls and take public polls that turned out to be accurate. I don't think that's some genius.

Mr. Jones: Well, he was certainly good at turning himself into a brand, I'll say that. (Laughter)

Mr. Halperin: He was indeed. Because there was a hunger, there was a hunger for that, particularly on the left, but averaging public polls is not some sorcerer's trick.

...you should be humble in the face of what data can tell you, instead of overly confident...

Ms. Anderson: And now he's not the only person doing this. Now it seems like every site out there has to have its own model, and there's even a site now that does an average of the models. (Laughter)

Ms. Anderson: We've really gone down the rabbit hole here.

Mr. Jones: See what you did?

Ms. Anderson: But he's right that it's garbage in, garbage out, and I think that's one of the troubles – that people, they view data as having all of this certainty, and actually, if you're somebody who really understands data, you understand that what data does is that is allows you to quantify uncertainty, that you should be humble in the face of what data can tell you, instead of overly confident, and I think –

Mr. Jones: Well, would you develop that thought? That's very interesting, "You should be humble in the face of data."

Ms. Anderson: So let's take polling, for instance, which is the field where I work. You can take a poll and a pollster will tell you, "we know with a 3.1 percent margin of error that you are up by five in this race." Well, that's not really telling the whole story, because that's based on, let's say, it was a telephone poll. How many of you have a landline telephone that you answer regularly? (Laughter)

Ms. Anderson: And so the way that a lot of polling is done, it badly, badly needs [to be] rethought, there needs to be innovation in this space. Right now, there's no such thing as a perfect poll. There's no perfect way to get a random sample of voters. There are things you can do to get pretty close and to work with the data after the fact, but you're loading in personal assumptions at that point. And so looking at what data can tell you and realizing that, while it's not perfect, it can be some of the best information you can have. But understanding that just because you got a poll in or two polls in that shows someone up by five, if the assumptions within that poll are wrong, it's almost like having no data. Really instead of looking at data as the gospel, looking at it as a guidepost and understanding the biases and assumptions that are baked into it is incredibly important.

Mr. Jones: Well, there are a couple of people I'd like to get to comment on this, while we're on this subject because they've got too much knowledge not to. This is Nick Sinai. Nick is the Walter Shorenstein Fellow at the Shorenstein Center, just began yesterday, and the day before yesterday,

he was at the White House as one the senior people in technology there. Data is the subject and the theme of his time at the Kennedy School and the Shorenstein Center. When you hear "humble in the face of data," what do you think?

Mr. Sinai: Well, thank you. One, I'm not an expert in either the press or in politics. I guess I know technology and government a little bit better, but I think humility in the face of data is really important. Data is messy, and I think that's a really good point that Kristen's making.

Right now, there's no such thing as a perfect poll. There's no perfect way to get a random sample of voters. There are things you can do to get pretty close and to work with the data after the fact, but you're loading in personal assumptions at that point.

What I would like to see is data about government and policy. In the UK, the driver's license is actually a federal service that is delivered online, and so you can see how many people got a driver's license today, and you can see what the customer service was, how people feel that service was delivered today. And what's telling is in the response to the VA crisis, one of the things that the VA committed to do was publish more information about the wait times at a variety of facilities. And so where we really need to go is architecting the delivery of government services so that they're not stuck in PDFs once a quarter or once a year, but essentially there's real time information about the performance of transactions and benefits of government.

Mr. Jones: Matt Hindman is also a Shorenstein Fellow this semester.

Mr. Hindman: So I think this is a very interesting discussion, and I think that Kristen is exactly right in terms of the importance of quantifying our uncertainty, but I couldn't disagree more with you, Mark, about the value of this kind of data driven journalism. I think it ties in very much with the substance of what you were arguing for last night.

Certainly by the end of the cycle, all you're doing essentially is averaging public polls. That's not the value of something like what Nate Silver is doing and what they're doing at Huff Post or The Monkey Cage or half a dozen other places. The value is figuring out the state of the race a year or more before election day. You can see very clearly that these models work pretty well even really far out and that they do a pretty good job of capturing exactly what the state of the race is.

Now you complain about somebody who had a 90 percent chance of winning the race who lost, right, narrowly, but the whole point of these models is that somebody who has a 90% chance to win should also lose 10

precent of the time. And these models are actually pretty well calibrated. They do a pretty good job of getting right at that 90 percent.

Mr. Halperin: I'm not sure what you're saying we disagree about, but I would rather have the space, the bandwidth that citizens have, to think about our politics and our government taken up with thinking about the personalities of the candidates, the policies they're proposing, will they improve the real lives of real people – over a year out trying to decide if Kay Hagan has a 76 percent chance of winning or a 74 percent chance of winning.

Mr. Hindman: But I think my argument would be that this constant horserace is really what's crowding out policy substance.

Mr. Halperin: Yeah, and what drives the horserace in our media today more than anything else are these bogus models that, a year out, people are fascinated by it to say, "Does Kay Hagan have a 76 percent chance or a 74 percent chance?" That's the absolute horserace. That's creating a model to say what's the horserace situation? That's where the horserace comes from now. Ironically, the people who do these things criticize horserace coverage, but, again, I don't see what the point is a year out to know what the percentage chance some made up model projects of Kay Hagan winning or not. I just don't see the point of it.

Ms. Anderson: I think there's a tension in data journalism, where someone who is a political scientist knows that when the model moves from 76 percent to 74 percent that that's not really a big deal, but there's also an appetite for panic –"Oh, my gosh. The model changed by 2 percent!" I think the incentives are to make things seem like a bigger deal than a statistical awareness of what's happening would recommend. I think a big tension in data journalism is that things that statistically are not a big deal can become really big and interesting and clickable headlines, and how do you balance that tension?

...what drives the horserace in our media today more than anything else are these bogus models that, a year out, people are fascinated by it to say, "Does Kay Hagan have a 76 percent chance or a 74 percent chance?"

Mr. Halperin: You're saying, "tension." It's a great euphemism. What it is is just made up, and serious news organizations now will write big stories, mostly on blogs, that say, "Kay Hagan's gone from 76 to 74. Let's look at why that is," when obviously it's statistically meaningless even if the model weren't bogus.

Mr. Heilemann: To me, one of the most fascinating things about this midterm election is in the realm of data. And just to go back to one point from the outset, we started talking about – and Jill knows this really well – FiveThirtyEight, I don't remember exactly what the number was, but the traffic to The New York Times.com ?

Ms. Abramson: Huge.

Mr. Heilemann: I mean it was vast, right? So whatever you think of FiveThirtyEight –

Ms. Abramson: People were interested in it.

I think the incentives are to make things seem like a bigger deal than a statistical awareness of what's happening would recommend.

Mr. Heilemann: And I share some of Mark's skepticism about it. There was a lot of demand out there for it. Whatever you want to say that it's not, it's horserace journalism in its purest form in some sense, as Mark just said, because it's just horserace numbers. But it's also not morsels or scooplets or personalities or controversy. It's data. People want data, right? So there's a big market out there for data.

What we do with that market, how it gets addressed, is an interesting question going forward, and one of the things that I found interesting about this midterm election was now that there's so much attention being paid to this data, we're now seeing the corruption of pollsters. And this has been written about by FiveThirtyEight, among others, as pollsters want to be closer to the average, and they don't want to be wrong, so they will not publish outliers. And the most striking example of this – and this goes again to Mark's thing about garbage in, garbage out – the Iowa Senate race this year, where on the eve of the race, 12 of the final 13 surveys had the race between a one-point lead for Bruce Braley and a four-point lead for Joni Ernst. There was only one poll, it was an outlying poll – it happened to be the pollster for Bloomberg Politics – a *Des Moines Register* poll, Ann Selzer, who said that Joni Ernst would win by seven points, and took an incredible amount of abuse for her outlier. And then, in the end, Joni Ernst won by 8.5 percentage points and Ann Selzer was the only one close.

...now that there's so much attention being paid to this data, we're now seeing the corruption of pollsters.

And the point I want to make about that other than the fact that Ann Selzer's great, was that she resisted the pressure to compromise her model, but many others apparently did not and looked at this and said, "I am more afraid of being wildly wrong than being

slightly wrong, so I will do whatever it is that was done to their models to get them closer to the mean. And that is the ultimate case of garbage in, garbage out. And it's a weird thing because as there's now more scrutiny of polls, rather than getting better polls, it looks like we're getting worse polls.

Mr. Jones: Talk about the pressure that is brought to bear in a situation like that. Is this some other pollsters who are ridiculing her numbers because they conflict with their own? Is it from the blogosphere? Where does that pressure and abuse come from?

Mr. Halperin: It might come from Mrs. Braley. (Laughter)

Mr. Heilemann: Yeah, all of the above. I think the fear is, as these pollsters get closer to election day, is that publishing an outlier will make them look silly when the ultimate election comes, because that's what they're going to be judged on. They're not going to be judged on a poll that they did six months earlier, or a year earlier, or 18 months earlier. They're going to be judged on how close their final poll was to the actual outcome, and so pollsters are afraid to be wildly outside the pack, even if their numbers tell them that in fact the outcome is going to be outside what the polling average is.

Mr. Jones: Okay, the morning after, when she was proved right and everybody else was proved wrong, was there deathly silence, or was there praise?

Mr. Heilemann: She got a lot of praise. I mean she got it rightly, a lot of people were saying, "Wow, you know Ann Selzer was right," and she was lifted up and given a lot of credit for having defied the conventional wisdom.

Mr. Jones: Let's shift gears slightly and look at this not so much from the journalist perspective, but from the perspective of American politics. These things are being not just done for journalists and for journalism. The campaigns are paying a lot of attention to it. Your clients, I assume, Kristen, are mostly aspiring office holders, correct?

Ms. Anderson: Folks that are very interested in understanding what the political climate is. (Laughter)

Mr. Jones: Right. So what is this doing to politics? Is this basically making politics pure pandering? Is it something that is going to make the political climate worse, or is it something that might tip us over into Mark Halperin's idea last night that this is something that really could change very quickly for the better? What do you think?

Ms. Anderson: So I think it can go one of two ways. The other way that data's playing a huge role in politics now is it's letting us identify particular voters and figure out what we think their political leanings are based on thousands of different variables about their lives, ranging from their age

and their gender, to whether they have a knitting habit and have a dog. Now, the vast majority of those variables don't actually matter, but you can now figure out what voters really care about in a very specific way.

What concerns me is that instead of pandering, we'll see campaigns with really fragmented messages where they're trying to reach a million different voters with a million different, very specific messages, and it winds up being a campaign about nothing, where the overall message is just playing it incredibly safe, and they're trying to figure out how to piece together that 50 percent, 50.1 percent of voters in order to win, instead of trying to aim for a broad coalition.

What concerns me is that instead of pandering, we'll see campaigns with really fragmented messages where they're trying to reach a million different voters with a million different, very specific messages...

Mr. Jones: Mark, I know you were reaching for optimism last night, and you expressed optimism last night, but mostly it was in the form of hope, but without much realistic sense that much is going to change. How do you see the data element playing into the political system that we have, and the partisanship we have right now?

Mr. Halperin: Well, the president's reelection campaign was a watershed in excellence for a campaign, in part because they had very smart people and built on what they'd done in 2008, but in part because they took a quantitative difference and made a qualitative difference in terms of not just what they spent the money on to integrate polling, different kinds of data into the polling side with market research, etc. – but the volume of it. And they laughed at the Republican polling and they laughed at the media polling because it was so small in scale compared to what they were doing – and sophistication – they knew it wasn't even close to the sophisticated instrument they had to measure voter sentiment, not just in the horserace, but voter sentiment in terms of where the president stood with different voters in the targeted states.

A lot of what's wrong on the media side now, and some of the non-political polling, is the sample sizes are too small and organizations aren't doing the sophisticated questioning about methodology that any serious pollster, whether it's a political pollster, media pollster, has to do now. I don't think anyone in 2016, despite the norm of improvement every four years, is going to reach what the President's reelection campaign did, for a variety of reasons, in part because they're all starting so late and in part

because I don't think they'll be able to assemble the kind of team the President did for a reelect.

At the same time, I think serious news organizations are examining their methodology, and the biggest problem is money, because you cannot do this on the cheap. And you look at the national exit poll, which I think has become a really flawed instrument because it is underfunded, and I worry that that data is used by everybody as gospel. John Kasich got a quarter of the black vote in Ohio, maybe, but that's based on an exit poll, which, again, is not funded the way it used to be. So it's incumbent upon news organizations and political operations, whether they're campaigns or interest groups or private polling firms, to figure out how to build something close to as sophisticated as what the president did.

...many news organizations are racing to set up a data journalism group...they are mainly doing it on the cheap, and where it becomes much cheaper is comparing having a bank of "political reporters" sitting at long tables behind computer screens – as opposed to actually sending reporters out in the country to, oh my God, talk to actual voters.

Mr. Jones: Jill, how do you respond to that?

Ms. Abramson: Well, I think Mark said the money word, which is "money," and something that I worry about more broadly when it comes to data journalism, which is very much the "it" thing right now, where many news organizations are racing to set up a data journalism group, is that they are mainly doing it on the cheap, and where it becomes much cheaper is comparing having a bank of "political reporters" sitting at long tables behind computer screens – as opposed to actually sending reporters out in the country to, oh my God, talk to actual voters.

The latter is shrinking because it's expensive to do that, and basically, if you go around and you see how most young political reporters are working today, they've got their tweet deck up, they're maybe working with their data journalism colleagues, but one place they aren't is where David Rogers – you know I don't want to sound like an old fogey, but when David and I worked in the Washington Bureau of *The Wall Street Journal* under Al Hunt, and when campaign season got into high gear, we all left Washington, we went out in the country to do actual reporting and talking to actual people, and I think because it's expensive, many news

organizations are kind of throwing that out the window while they set up their data journalism group.

Mr. Jones: David, how do respond to that? And if looked at it from the political perspective, and frankly, given your knowledge of the personalities and the character of Congress, how do the members of Congress view this kind of climate of data, with some lack of clarity about how to interpret it, and what it means, and how accurate it is?

Mr. Rogers: Well, Congress is sort of in an odd situation because of the districting and how they even worry more about their primaries than their general elections in most cases. My general reaction to some of this is as long as I've been covering politics, people worry too much about the horserace and so forth, and I think we ought to get over it. It sort of is a horserace and we should just deal with it. But then when we get into all this data like we're going to predict the horserace, we sort of miss the point of going out and talking to people.

Going back to something earlier, I think that the trick will be people who start to go to state capitols – and build a network from the state capitols up – and then one of the best things to do would be to build a system where you were having people on the ground in the state capitols. And from that you build up to a better understanding of the country, and I do think that that's possible.

Mr. Jones: Mark, you said that you don't think that what the Obama campaign did in 2012 in terms of this kind of polling is going to be matched. Do you mean that it's been completely dismantled, that the Clinton campaign or the Democratic campaign and the Republican party's campaign are not going to be organized in the same kind of way at all? Is it the matter of leadership, resources, triage, what?

Mr. Halperin: All of those things. I think that the president has had the benefit of being an incumbent. He had the benefit of a returning team supplemented with new people, with new creativity, and a real understanding and discipline to spend not just on television advertising, but on building research. Building the research costs a lot of money by the scale of everything but television advertising, but they recognize the value of it for peace of mind about where the race stood but also, again, about how to reach voters.

I look at the political operations of Secretary Clinton and of all the Republicans who are thinking about running, and I can just tell you, even if they started today, they're behind in everything.

I look at the political operations of Secretary Clinton and of all the Republicans who are thinking about running, and I can just tell you, even if they started today, they're behind in everything. They're behind in fundraising. They're behind on Ohio, New Hampshire, South Carolina. They're behind in Congressional relations. They're behind, in most cases, on national identity. I mean they're behind in so much, so the bandwidth to do this, even if they started today – I just don't think as a temporal matter that they can build what the president built in time.

Mr. Heilemann: What the president had was an incumbent with four years, a billion dollars and no challenger.

Mr. Halperin: And a culture.

Mr. Heilemann: And a culture, right, and a team, a returning team. So there's no one like that with the time, the money, and the infrastructure of both human capital and technological infrastructure. There's nobody like that in this cycle. If you gave Hillary Clinton – if she knew she was running two years ago and she had a billion dollars to start with – it's not that it could not be replicated. It's just that it will not be replicated, because of the nature of the advantages that Obama had.

Ms. Anderson: One of the things I consistently hear from folks on the right side of the aisle is that the problem for Republicans in 2012 was that the research was bad. But moving forward from there, the ability to acquire the data is not very hard. The ability to get good computers and hire a bunch of smart people, that's all doable. The bigger problem is the culture change and allowing data to drive decisions, and that's something where I still feel the Democrats are a little ahead of Republicans when it comes to using data to make smart choices about which voters you're going to talk to, and how you're going to structure your campaign, and how you're going to build your field operation. I think Republicans and Democrats can reach parity, and I think actually the RNC in 2014 did a pretty good job compared to the Democrats of building these models and collecting this data, and they've really made huge advances. But the bigger challenge now is the culture change within these campaign operations.

The bigger problem is the culture change and allowing data to drive decisions, and that's something where I still feel the Democrats are a little ahead of Republicans when it comes to using data to make smart choices...

Mr. Jones: So what does this mean for the 2016 campaign? What is the implication?

Ms. Anderson: I think the implication is that it's quite possible that-Mark's right, that neither campaign will be able to match what the Obama team did, but it's also the case that you don't want to be the campaign in 2016 that's trying to do what everybody was doing four years ago. You want to be coming up with the next thing, and I think that the next thing for a smart campaign to do would be – right now we view digital and data as kind of separate departments, they are separate from the communications team, they are separate from the finance team. I think smart campaigns will really make sure that they're integrated, that instead of having a separate digital department, you're recognizing that digital is integrated throughout the campaign.

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There was a big article, I believe in Politico, where they were interviewing a number of different Republican digital and data strategists about would they want to go work for somebody in 2016? And the response was, "We'd like to, but we need to have a seat at the senior staff table," because that's always been a problem on the right, that the senior staff is the ad makers, the fundraisers, the general consultants, and the data and digital guys, they're kind of second or third tier. That's the culture change that I'm talking about where a campaign that's really going to win in 2016 or 2020 will make sure they have those data driven voices at the table when these big decisions are being made.

Mr. Jones: John, does that square with your sense?

Mr. Heilemann: Yeah, I think Mark is a hundred percent right, and for anybody who's interested in looking at this, it was actually at this place, at the Kennedy School, at the IOP campaign manager's event in 2012, that the Obama campaign and the Romney campaign talked in some detail about the difference, what they were doing data-wise in the last two months of the campaign. And I think that almost everyone in the room, their jaws dropped at the disparity. I mean it was –

Mr. Jones: It was embarrassing.

Mr. Heilemann: The scale of the Obama operation, even for those of us who covered it closely, was jaw dropping and the disparity was also jaw dropping.

But that actually raises two points. I think Mark is a hundred percent right that no one will rival or do on the scale what the Obama campaign

did in 2016 [sic] but I also think the disparity will not be as great, because Republicans were embarrassed by the disparity in 2012 and by the failure on election day, and part of the reason why Republicans are in a much better place as of 2014 is because of the scale of their embarrassment in 2012. They said, "We now must now be competitive in this area," so they invested very heavily in that. I think the Democratic side and the Republican side going into 2016, whoever those nominees are, will be much closer to parity than the race was obviously in 2012 when there was nothing.

Mr. Jones: Well, when you look at the way the race appears to shaping up, Hillary Clinton is the odds on favorite if she wants to run to get the nomination, whereas the Republican nomination is completely up for grabs. Does that give the Democrats, and Hillary's campaign in particular, an advantage, or are they even trying to take advantage of the likelihood that she will not face serious competition?

Mr. Heilemann: Well, I think the first presupposition there is that she is going to run, and I know there are at least two people on this panel who are not a hundred percent sure that she's going to actually run. Charlie Cook, the other day, said he thought there was a 30 percent chance that she wouldn't run. I don't think 30 percent is right, but I think there's maybe a 20 percent chance that she won't run. I don't know how to assign odds to that without using a lot of fake data. (Laughter)

Mr. Heilemann: But I think there is some chance, a nontrivial chance, that she will decide not to run, and the longer she waits – and Mark suggested something a second ago which I think is true – she has nothing like a campaign infrastructure built now. She has a large, sprawling, factious collection of advisors, some people she talks to who she really trusts, a whole bunch of people jockeying for position, but she doesn't have anything like an actual, even a shadow, campaign right now that's a functional unit that's actually really preparing in a way like they are sure she's running.

And so every day that there is still uncertainty in her world, and every day that she does not actually make a decision to run is a day that they've squandered some of the advantage that she should have on getting a leg up on whatever the Republican field ends up looking like.

From the Floor: But the issue to me is the fact that people actually make decisions based upon this data. Originally Obama had an Iraq problem. He therefore said, "I'm going to be strong and draw the line in Afghanistan," and all the data said that he was perceived as being weak on military issues, and then look what that got us into. Last night, you said you hoped the candidates would be honest and forthright and put themselves out. What I worry about is their listening to all this data, and they're becoming products of this data.

Mr. Jones: Yeah, pandering. I mean that's the only real word for it. Mark, what do you think?

Mr. Halperin: Well, I think there is a secret history of the president's time in national life, in which his advisors have had more data than any presidential campaign, and any president, has ever had. I don't get the sense that the president though is particularly driven by that. I think he factors it in, sometimes through the filter of the advice he's given, but I don't think he's meek, and I can point to many of the decisions he's made where if you were simply following what the pollsters told him to do, he'd run counter to that.

...if you're using polling to decide what you believe, you're doing it wrong. What polling should be doing is showing you where the areas of weakness are, where the areas of strength are, so that you can make sure that you're focusing on your strengths. But polling should not be a license to flip flop.

From the Floor: No, I'm talking about when they're running for office and the promises and the positions that they take. I wonder if anybody has done any analysis, saying how much the candidate had to pander once they were in office.

Mr. Jones: Kristen, why don't you address that? I mean effectively for your clients, you have data and you say you're able to say "this is what these people who are prospective voters care about." Does that mean that the candidate is expected to shift or necessarily make a decision based on that information? Obviously, gathering that information means that it's worth something to them, they're paying for it.

Ms. Anderson: Well, you certainly want to know where there are areas of agreement and disagreement between you as a candidate, you as an issue advocacy group, and the voters or the audience that you're looking to reach. However, if you're using polling to decide what you believe, you're doing it wrong. What polling should be doing is showing you where the areas of weakness are, where the areas of strength are, so that you can make sure that you're focusing on your strengths. But polling should not be a license to flip flop. So we talked about flip flops last night and how people should be encouraged to flip flop if they get new information that encourages them to want to change their view. I don't think a polling result should be that trigger for a flip flop.

And I actually think that what you're seeing nowadays is a real hunger for authenticity in politics, so much of Mark's advice to candidates about, stick up for what you believe even if it's unpopular, don't be afraid to put

your personality out there, be yourself, be authentic, I think is really, really important. I think voters nowadays, there's so little trust in political advertising, there's so little trust in what politicians have to say, that anyone who actually sounds like they believe what they are saying, that gets you a lot of credibility. And I think voters are willing to listen to somebody with whom they disagree, but they believe that person really believes what they're saying.

And I'd be interested to see if any of these candidates in 2016 do try that kind of approach where, let's say you're in a Republican primary and you hold a position that the polls indicate might be dangerous to you with a Republican primary electorate. How you handle that, whether you stick to that position and have a good defense for it, or whether you run from it or are guided by the polls.

Mr. Jones: Is polling and data gathering being used to determine what is the issue, or package of issues, that a prospective voter will make a decision on no matter how he or she feels about every other aspect of a campaign's or candidate's position? For instance, I'm reminded of how Al Gore, my view anyway, lost the presidential election because of his embrace of gun control, which is something that was very unpopular in the state of Tennessee and very unpopular in the state of Arkansas, and if he'd won either one of those states, he would have been President of the United States.

I guess my point is, is that knowledge that if you support gun control, no matter how the economic interest, or other interests may conform to what a candidate theoretically would appeal to you for, that is the killer. That is the killer issue. That's something that has been a tradition in American politics since Prohibition. That's how Prohibition got passed. And I worry about that because it's like what Bill was saying in a way – if you are mindful that people will decide these things on maybe one or two issues, no matter what else you think about it, where does that put the candidate in terms of making that calculation of what to give away and what to keep in order to actually simply get elected?

Ms. Anderson: Well, I think that's a decision that each candidate would have to make for themselves, and I would hope that they would stick to what they believe in hell or high water. But one of the things you can then change is what priority a certain issue is in the race. So I may disagree with a candidate on three or four issues, but if those are not particularly important issues, understanding that dynamic and trying to really put the focus on the areas where we do agree is strategically what I think a smart candidate would do in that situation.

Mr. Jones: Mark, John, do you all look at the voting population of the United States, as basically fitting that profile I just described, having one or two issues that trump all others?

Mr. Heilemann: I don't. It's a complicated question. I think there are certainly voters who are single issue voters. That's a subset of the American electorate, or voters who have one or two issues that move them more than almost anything else. I think by and large, a much larger segment of the American electorate is moved by some complex of issues that express their values and express their concerns on a daily basis.

I don't believe in a construct where there's digital journalism and then other journalism.

I think most people are mostly motivated by what people think of primarily as pocketbook issues, although I don't mean that in the narrowest sense. I mean education, healthcare, jobs, wages, stuff that affects them and their families on a basic level and how that overlays with what their values are. And I mean "values" broadly defined, not ideologically narrowing, because I don't think the majority of people actually have any firm ideology, but they do have values, the way they value things like fairness or opportunity or community or whatever, and that overlay of values on top of issues that directly affect them and their families, I think, is what motivates most people as opposed to one or two single issues that fall into a readily identifiable ideological category.

From the Floor: I would like to go back to this optimistic side. Could we argue that the single biggest success of digital media is in fact to force the traditional media to be better, quality-oriented media? Now we are inundated by news. They are coming every second on your smartphone, so we don't need newspapers to get the news. We need a journalist to explain the news, to put the news in perspective, to help the people understand because we have the news, but we don't have the meaning of the news, and the people are starving to find this meaning and to be citizens. And since we need those journalists back, then it seems to me that the digital media are endangering bad journalists, tabloid journalists, but are helping the traditional media, which are called journalists properly, to get better. Isn't that an optimist view?

Mr. Jones: Okay, well, let me ask Jill and David to respond to that.

Ms. Abramson: Well, you know, I don't believe in a construct where there's digital journalism and then other journalism. I think unquestionably journalism is transitioning into a digital world and that many news organizations are a hundred percent digital. I think the challenge is that the media landscape that faces us now has a certain number of very high

quality news organizations: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, the *Financial Times*, some others that I'm leaving out, and that those news organizations have found a somewhat successful – I'm optimistic about it – business model where they've managed to replicate what was a stable, double stream revenue source to support news gathering, i.e. advertising and circulation. They've managed digitally to be able to begin charging subscription revenue.

The challenge is that there are a small group of quality survivors, but what's being wiped out is regional and local coverage, and newspapers that cater to those audiences are kind of being wiped out of the news landscape.

But the number of news organizations that are able to succeed at that are going to be small because your news has to be genuinely at such a high quality that people are going to pay for it, given the kind of inundation of information that you just described. And I think that's the challenge. The challenge is that there are a small group of quality survivors, but what's being wiped out is regional and local coverage, and newspapers that cater to those audiences are kind of being wiped out of the news landscape.

Mr. Jones: David Rogers, let me ask you. The essential point I think that Bernard is making is that journalists are needed to explain and give context, and this is one of the things that when you read your articles, there's usually a statement of fact, and then there's a paragraph or two that explains in context who the people are who made this decision, why they did it, what the pressures were on them from various places. In other words, you take pains in a lot of your reporting, it seems to me, to embed context into the article, but it's context based on what your own personal analysis is of the situation. That's, it seems to me, a hybrid of what used to be a kind of "just the facts, ma'am," kind of reporting.

Mr. Rogers: I think when people talk about digital stuff, they talk about all the apps and the fast stuff, but the reality is we're really talking about several things at once here because the reality is it's cheaper to present news digitally now. You don't have to print the paper, you don't have to have the trucks and all that kind of stuff. That's part of what's happening. So there's no real reason why digital newspapers can't be as thoughtful as regular newspapers, so I don't buy that.

Ken Hartman taught me a long time ago part of journalism is getting the people to read you, part of it is entertainment, and you do want to be able to explain to people, you want to give people the context, and I think that's just basic journalism. I think at Politico I probably have more free-

dom to do that than I did under the *Journal*, and I think that probably with the advent of so many outlets, there's probably a little more freedom. You have to guard yourself on it too, you have to be strict with yourself that you're not going too far in your explanation of something, that you're worried about opinion. But I do think, that's all possible.

If the next candidates don't have all the data that Obama had – and I totally understand what Mark and John are saying – I'm not sure that's necessarily bad. It might be better, maybe then they'll go out and figure it out themselves and not have David Plouffe tell them something. But the point is, I don't really see the point about digital.

I think we're trying to communicate to people what's happening in the world, and young people, people have all this access to bits of news with their devices. But the reality is, there's still the market for the larger thing, and in fact I suppose partially I sometimes worry Politico is becoming almost too much a magazine at times than a newspaper, because we have found increasingly it could become an outlet for people who want to write about something. You know what I mean? It's almost like the people are coming forward who want to write. I mean one example is – there was a terrible traffic jam in Atlanta, that snowstorm, okay? Well, out of the blue, this woman who works in Atlanta who's had a planning background, wrote this very intelligent explanation why it was that way, and she wasn't a Politico reporter. And I think that is an exciting side of Internet journalism. I mean these people come forward and want to write.

From the Floor: What do you think about the intersection of journalistic bias and statistical distributions in big data. So if we think about Republican office holders, right, they're a statistical distribution, and there's a mean and there's a mode, and when we talk about authenticity, usually we're talking about mavericks or outliers, we're talking about people who are outside the mean and the mode. So if you are a traditional Republican and you talk that way and you act that way, somehow you're not quite authentic, right? But if you're off on the mean, then you're authentic. That to me is a journalistic bias.

So then I think about big data and what I predict will be the uses of it. I think we're going to get more "Top 10" lists, and we'll get deep analysis out of big data. Here are the top five housing markets or top 10 housing markets. You can use that data quite easily for that kind of analysis. For example, the auto safety data. That's an enormous amount of work. It requires extraordinary statistical capacity and probably doesn't have the audience interest.

Mr. Rogers: I don't agree. You said the authentic Republican is the outlier?

From the Floor: No, no. I said there's a little bit of a tendency in journalism to see the outlier as being more authentic than the one that's at the mean or the mode.

Mr. Rogers: Well, I certainly don't agree with that. I mean Tom Cole from Oklahoma is by any stretch of the imagination a current mainstream Republican, and he's someone that the press goes to a great deal. And I think generationally, one of the big things in this next Congress will be you have a set of people on the Republican side, and this is a human thing, this has nothing to do with ideology, who are coming to the end of the road. I mean how long can Lamar Alexander give a eulogy for Howard Baker and not do something when he's going to be 80 by the time his term ends? How long can Murkowski, who may not run again for the Senate – she's now got an opportunity to do something before she ends. Susan Collins – these people. I don't agree. We can say data will lead to lists of 10s. I mean God knows we can do things the worst possible, and we often do, but the reality is that in terms of government, there are people that we have to just overwhelm with this data to ignore the human side, and the fact that these are people who are in government for some reason, and they're running out of time.

Mr. Jones: Well, what do you, for instance, expect Lamar Alexander to do with the time he has?

Mr. Rogers: Well, if you know Lamar Alexander, you know not to answer too exactly. (Laughter)

Mr. Rogers: But it's like Mathias. Mathias used to be like this, and I covered Mathias. Every year, Mathias would do something, you know what I mean? And Mary McGrory would write a great column about him, and "Mac" stood up and so forth, and I used to come breathlessly across and say, "What? Senator. Senator." "No, no." It's like he'd done it for that year. (Laughter)

Mr. Rogers: Okay, so Lamar Alexander can be a little that way, but Lamar Alexander is on Appropriations, Lamar Alexander has a significant role in the education and labor committee, and Lamar Alexander has been in leadership, he's been a governor, he has a capacity to do a tremendous amount.

And Tom Cole was someone who has a leadership role, he's been in a lot of politics, he's someone that Boehner will listen to, he has a potential role there. All these people break your heart at different times. I mean Tom Cole, I never understood this, when the children came over the border and they put some of them at Fort Sill, Tom Cole was bent out of shape. Fort Sill's like 19 square miles, and there were like 100 kids there. What the hell? You know, it was not an issue, but he made a big issue of it.

So I don't want to claim it's going to be perfect, but I do think you can't lose sight of the fact that these are human beings who have chosen to be in this role, and you have to keep that in mind in terms of what they should do. I think that Lamar Alexander has potentially a very significant role in this caucus. And there's a set of people, if you go through the list, and I'm not talking ideology, I'm just talking about think how old they are, what they've got ahead of them, that I think they have to come to grips with what they can do.

I think that the rise of social media is changing the way that people expect their leaders to interact with them. So they expect it to be much more personal.

Mr. Sinai: I was going to ask about social media and how that's changing both campaigns and perhaps, and I've seen this from the inside, the digital teams and how they have used digital media to communicate. One of my favorite examples is actually "We, the People," which is an online petitions platform for the White House, and one of my favorite ones was the "Deport Piers Morgan" petition – (Laughter)

Mr. Sinai: Where Piers Morgan was talking about gun control. And what was interesting about this one is it reached the 100,000 threshold, so, as the White House, we committed to respond, and so we said, "Well, we respect the Second Amendment, but we also respect the First Amendment, and Piers Morgan shouldn't be deported." Well, we sent it out to over 100,000 people because we had their emails, and what was interesting is those are 100,000 people who normally don't particularly like us, who don't go to WhiteHouse.gov very often or engage with us very often, when we then did some polling afterwards, we found that they really appreciated our answer, a lot of them indicated they learned something new, and so it was a really interesting way to engage with part of the American people that might not normally engage with our various Twitter handles or other kind of mechanisms that we have.

Mr. Jones: Well, let me ask this side of the table, so how do you respond to that?

Ms. Anderson: I think that the rise of social media is changing the way that people expect their leaders to interact with them. So they expect it to be much more personal. It's really interesting to watch how different politicians use social media in different ways and how some of them kind of get how social media works and others view it as just another tech tool to broadcast the same sort of message.

So the perfect example is, and I feel like this is turning into a bit of a Romney beat up kind session, but in 2012, if you looked at Mitt

Romney's Facebook page, going right up to election day, it was all "here's how you can donate money, here's a picture from a rally," here's, campaign, campaign, campaign. And as soon as the campaign was over, it suddenly became pictures of Mitt Romney and his grandkids. Even just this last weekend, the news was reading it, I saw the picture going around – it's Mitt Romney with his hair all messed up because he's at Thanksgiving dinner with his grandkids. There was the Mitt documentary that came out that sort of showed this other side of him as a person.

And nowadays we expect – and it's not just of our politicians, it's our celebrities, it's our journalists, how they're branding themselves, you put your personality out there, you create a brand and you support it through your actions on social media. I think people are now expecting much more of a personal understanding of the people that they're going to vote for, and they therefore expect social media to be used in kind of the same way that they keep track of what their friends and family are doing on social media.

Mr. Jones: Well, you know, John and Mark, you're basically in the process of building a brand. Do you feel that you need to share every aspect of your life with the public?

Mr. Halperin: That would be trouble if I did. (Laughter)

Mr. Heilemann: I would be arrested more often than I frequently am. I'll tell you what has been a learning experience. I don't know if it's as much a learning experience for Mark as it has been for me, but as we set up and [have] been launching Bloomberg Politics, having one's eyes open to the role that social media now plays in driving traffic to news and analysis, and other things that are on our site. It is the behavioral patterns that are changing in terms of how people find the news, and the role that social media, more Facebook than Twitter, but Twitter to some extent, is really pretty staggering.

And it's clear that the old model of people going and checking the home page of Politico or *The New York Times* or Bloomberg Politics is not the way people are interacting mainly with news. They don't go to the home page and try to see what's up there. Some do. But many, many more find their way to stories because their friends on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media – they find it in their stream somehow, and that's how they come to the site. And that is a huge deal for how all news organizations and all media operations think about how they go about disseminating the work of their reporters and analysts and feature writers or whatever.

Mr. Jones: So, Mark, did you post selfies on Facebook from your trip to Italy recently?

Mr. Halperin: No. I didn't do that. (Laughter)

Mr. Halperin: I think that there's a lot of challenges to it. The biggest one is trying to imbue social media content with the values that you have as a journalist in longer forums. I share Professor Patterson's concern about lists, taking data and doing the quick thing with it. I think you have to marry up additional concerns. You marry up the data to good writers and people who know how to make a compelling video, and that same challenge exists in social media. The lure of it as a commercial enterprise and as an immediate to reach viewers and readers and listeners is pretty hard to resist, but as I said, my thinking about it for myself and for Bloomberg Politics, a lot of that revolves around how do you in 140 characters do something that represents the brand you want to have, of quality and integrity and consistency, with everything else you're doing?

From the Floor: Jill talked honestly and carefully about branding and high quality journalism, but what the panel has mostly in common is a one-to-many model, one expert, whether it's an expert in polling or an expert in whatever, to the multitude. And what we're seeing, as John rightly pointed out, is a many-to-many model, which is based on the smartphone, on the ubiquity of the Internet, on the ease of getting online and on people's reluctance to believe in what experts tell them, which is in some ways scary because what we have in this room is an elite group that believes, rightly or wrongly, probably rightly, that what we're saying is true. And we talk sometimes about the wisdom of crowds, but what about the stupidity of crowds? (Laughter)

From the Floor: When people vote against their own interests and do things that are clearly harmful to the long-term quality of the country? So I would like to hear more about how this paradigm is changing, what it means to politics and what it means to journalism.

Mr. Jones: Well, I want to give Mark and John the last word this morning. How would you respond to what Andy has said?

Mr. Heilemann: I guess I'd say that crowds are stupid sometimes, and crowds are smart sometimes. There's not a right answer to that, and I think this actually goes back to something that Bernard was saying before. Jill talked about the few, what had been the elite, traditional media operations that are trusted to do a lot of trusted news coverage. It's clear that we're moving into a world in which there is, as you said, a many-to-many model. Many people, citizen journalists, citizen commentators, social media, all that stuff, where the Internet is going to be producing a lot more voices and a bigger, more chaotic world of news commentary, news production, news analysis, etc., etc.

So I think there are many people who look at that and think that the biggest fear is that the stupidity of crowds or, to put it another way, that an

ocean of crap will flood and wash over what's left of quality. My optimism, to go back to our theme from last night, is that the great thing about getting rid of distribution monopolies and having a big, wide open world and having a more diverse and chaotic world, is that there is no limitation on the content that can be there. Crap can coexist pretty well right alongside quality.

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And it seems to me that as there is more and more crap, there's also a greater need for a premium on quality, which is to say, trusted guides and interpreters and sources to sort out the chaos, and sort out the wheat from the chaff, or the crap from the quality. The importance of people like David and other "experts" – I put quotes around that – but other people who know what they're talking about, actually will rise in a world where crap and quality coexist. People will be increasingly searching, not that they aren't inherently skeptical of some experts, but they're also recognizing their need to help people find where the quality is, and to be trusted authorities, and people who can place their imprimatur of their years of experience on certain information and help them make differentiations between what should be listened to, what should be trusted, and what should be discarded.

Mr. Jones: Mark.

Mr. Halperin: First, and since I know we're ending soon, I want to thank Alex and the Center for having us up here again and being such great hosts.

Look, I think that it's easy to overstate how different things are now from the way they've always been. Pre-digital age, there was a fair amount of crappy stuff, and there were times when crowds didn't behave in that intelligent a way. I think that if you look at where we are now as compared to where we were 10 years ago, when the leaders of most national news organizations were back on their heels trying to figure out how they were going to survive, and leaders spent an inordinate amount of their time figuring out how to cut staff and make up lost ad revenues as things went to digital, I think almost every major place that we care about as institutions in this country now are in a more aggressive posture, a more confident posture, and I think there are a lot of new places that are producing quality.

In the end, it's our responsibility to, as David has said a couple times correctly, make it entertaining, make it accessible, make it something that people want to consume, but it's going to be up to the citizens of the country to care about quality. We can't make young people care about quality product. We can try to make it entertaining, and we can work with civic leaders and educational institutions to try to foster their interest in the world around them. But in the end, it's going to be up to consumers and whether they want to be an educated electorate.

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You look at some of the countries we compete against, Japan is the one I know best, people read a lot more, [are] more educated, [are] more aware of the world around them. In many ways, the people in the United States are, but they're a pretty vibrant country, and our leadership role in the Internet allows us to take advantage of the possibilities of producing quality content that people are interested in.

I'm optimistic because I do think that we have some really smart people here, and some really great journalists. What I worry about within the realm of political journalism is the thing Jill said. Young reporters have to get out in the world and they have to know candidates and they have to know voters and they have to know politicians who are never going to run for president but are still doing important things, and that is the foundation of quality winning out over all the crap that's out there. If we produce it and consumers want it, I think the digital age is great for that.

Mr. Jones: John, Mark, David, congratulations. Jill, Kristen, thank you. Thank you all. (Applause)

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