CICERO SPEECHWRITING AWARDS

VITAL SPEECHES *of the day*

2025 EDITION

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GRAND AWARD WINNER

"To Prevent War, Spend More"

By Claire Craanen for Mark Rutte,
NATO Secretary General

Delivered at Residence Palace,
Brussels, Dec. 13, 2024

Thank you very much Rosa, and many thanks to Carnegie Europe for organising this event today in this beautiful venue.

It's great to see so many people here in the room and I know many more join us online, from all over the world.

So good morning, afternoon, evening to you all!

I am very honoured to start a crucial conversation with the citizens living in NATO countries, especially in Europe and Canada.

It's you I'm talking to.

It's your support I need.

It's your voices and actions that will determine our future security.

I'll be honest: the security situation does not look good.

It's undoubtedly the worst in my lifetime.

And I suspect in yours too.

From Brussels, it takes one day to drive to Ukraine.

One day -

That's how close the Russian bombs are falling.

It's how close the Iranian drones are flying.

And not very much further, the North Korean soldiers are fighting.

Every day, this war causes more devastation and death.

Every week, there are over 10.000 killed or wounded on all sides in Ukraine.

Over 1 million casualties since February 2022.

Putin is trying to wipe Ukraine off the map.

He is trying to fundamentally change the security architecture that has kept Europe safe for decades.

And he is trying to crush our freedom and way of life.

His pattern of aggression is not new.

But for too long, we did not act.

Georgia in 2008.

Crimea in 2014.

And many did not want to believe he would launch all-out war on Ukraine in February 2022.

How many more wake-up calls do we need?

We should be profoundly concerned.

I know I am.

Russia's economy is on a war footing.

In 2025, the total military spending will be 7 to 8% of GDP, if not more.

That's a third of Russia's state budget—the highest level since the Cold War.

And Russia's defence industry is producing huge numbers of tanks, armoured vehicles, and ammunition.

What Russia lacks in quality, it makes up for in quantity—with the help of China, Iran and North Korea.

This all points in one clear direction:

Russia is preparing for long-term confrontation.

With Ukraine.

And with us.

Hostile actions against Allied countries are real and accelerating.

Malicious cyber-attacks on both sides of the Atlantic.

Assassination attempts on British and German soil.

Explosions at an ammunition warehouse in Czechia.

The weaponization of migrants crossing illegally into Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland.

Jamming to disrupt civil aviation in the Baltic region.

These attacks are not just isolated incidents.

They are the result of a coordinated campaign to destabilise our societies and discourage us from supporting Ukraine.

They circumvent our deterrence and bring the front line to our front doors.

Even into our homes.

Putin believes that "a serious, irreconcilable struggle is unfolding for the formation of a new world order."

These are his own words.

Others share his belief.

Not least China.

We need to be clear-eyed about China's ambitions.

China is substantially building up its forces, including its nuclear weapons—with no transparency and no limitations.

From 200 warheads in 2020, China is expected to have more than 1,000 nuclear weapons by 2030.

Its space-launch investments are skyrocketing.

China is bullying Taiwan, and pursuing access to our critical infrastructure in ways that could cripple our societies.

Russia, China, but also North Korea and Iran, are hard at work to try to weaken North America and Europe.

To chip away at our freedom.

They want to reshape the global order.

Not to create a fairer one, but to secure their own spheres of influence.

They are testing us.

And the rest of the world is watching.

No, we are not at war.

But we are certainly not at peace either.

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I want to be clear:

There is no imminent military threat to our 32 Allies.

Because NATO has been transforming to keep us safe.

Defence spending has gone up.

Innovation has accelerated.

We have more forces at higher readiness.

Larger and more frequent military exercises.

More troops and hardware on our eastern flank.

And, with Finland and Sweden, more NATO Allies.

With all this, our deterrence is good—for now.

But it's tomorrow I'm worried about.

We are not ready for what is coming our way in four to five years.

Danger is moving towards us at full speed.

We must not look the other way.

We must face it:

What is happening in Ukraine could happen here too.

And regardless of the outcome of this war, we will not be safe in the future unless we are prepared to deal with danger.

We can do that.

We can prevent the next big war on NATO territory.

And preserve our way of life.

This requires us all to be faster and fiercer.

It is time to shift to a wartime mindset.

And turbo-charge our defence production and defence spending.

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On defence production, I am absolutely convinced that ramping it up is a top priority.

Since starting at NATO, I have been to Ukraine and seen what they need to fight for freedom.

I have visited engineers at Thales in France, a Rheinmetall factory in Italy and Turkish Aerospace Industries in Türkiye and saw the capabilities they provide.

And I have met with industry representatives who have told me what they require to increase their production.

I can tell you:

There is a lot that needs to be done to ensure long-term deterrence and restore peace.

We are not where we want to be.

Our defence industry, here in Europe, has been hollowed out by decades of underinvestment and narrow national industrial interest—when our continent was at peace, and defence became an optional extra.

As a result, our industry is too small, too fragmented and too slow.

Meanwhile, Russian arms factories are churning out war equipment around the clock.

And, despite the heroic efforts of our Ukrainian friends,

Russia is reconstituting its forces much quicker than we had anticipated.

They are learning fast from the battlefield.

China's military industrial base is also growing.

According to some sources, China is acquiring high-end weapons systems and equipment five to six times faster than the US.

It is heavily investing in munitions, accelerating space capabilities and expanding its nuclear arsenal—I repeat—without any transparency or limitations.

China is also challenging our technological edge—by investing massively in the disruptive technologies of tomorrow, including AI, quantum and space.

All this will help China with planning, command and control, and targeting.

Russia and China are racing ahead.

We risk lagging behind.

This is very dangerous.

But it does not have to be.

If we boost our industry, we can outpace our competitors.

So what are we waiting for?

We already have robust defence plans in place.

We know exactly how we will defend our Alliance and what future assets and capabilities we need—from ships, tanks, jets, munitions and satellites to new drone technologies.

Ukrainians are fighting against Russian swarms of drones.

That's what we need to be prepared for.

We also already have committed to accelerating the growth of defence industrial capacity and production across the Alliance.

Now, we must deliver—I repeat deliver—on our commitments.

We all have a part to play to make this happen.

To governments I say:

Give our industries the big orders and long-term contracts they need to rapidly produce more and better capabilities.

Buying only big-ticket items that are delivered too late will not keep us safe.

We also need modern capabilities that use the most advanced technologies. And we need them now.

So embrace risk and invest in the pool of innovators across our countries.

Embracing risk requires you, governments, to change outdated procurement rules.

And to reconsider your detailed national requirements.

With a million casualties on our doorstep, you have no time to waste.

As an example, related to armoured personnel carriers:

One nation needs to have the rear door opening to the left.

Another needs it to open to the right.

And a third one needs it to open upwards.

All these requirements are mandatory.

Is this how we define our needs and priorities, especially when time is of the essence?

This has got to change!

I also say to governments:

Stop creating barriers between each other and between industries, banks and pension funds.

Instead, tear these barriers down.

They only increase production costs, stifle innovation and ultimately hamper our security.

To the defence industry I say:

You need to do everything you can to keep us safe.

There is money on the table, and it will only increase.

So dare to innovate and take risks!

Come up with solutions to the swarms of drones and other new war tactics.

Put in the extra shifts and new production lines!

And finally, to the citizens of NATO countries, especially in Europe, I say:

Tell your banks and pension funds it is unacceptable that they refuse to invest in the defence industry.

Defence is not in the same category as illicit drugs and pornography.

Their investment in defence is an investment in our security.

It's a must!

This brings me to my main point.

Defence spending.

It is true that we spend more on defence now than we did a decade ago.

But we are still spending far less than during the Cold War.

Even though the threats to our freedom and security are just as big—if not bigger.

During the Cold War, Europeans spent far more than 3% of their GDP on defence.

With that mentality, we won the Cold War.

Spending dropped after the Iron Curtain fell.

The world was safer.

It is not anymore.

A decade ago, Allies agreed it was time to invest in defence once again.

The benchmark was set at 2%.

By 2023, NATO Allies agreed to invest 'at least' 2%.

At least…

I can tell you, we are going to need a lot more than 2%.

I know spending more on defence means spending less on other priorities.

But it is only a little less.

On average, European countries easily spend up to a quarter of their national income on pensions, health and social security systems.

We need a small fraction of that money to make our defences much stronger, and to preserve our way of life.

Prioritising defence requires political leadership.

It can be tough and risky in the short term.

But it's absolutely essential in the long term.

Some people will tell you otherwise.

They think strong defence is not the way to peace.

They are wrong.

Because without strong defence, there is no lasting security.

And without security, there is no freedom for our children and grandchildren.

No schools, no hospitals, no businesses.

There is nothing.

Those who lived through the Second World War know this.

And our Ukrainian friends are living it every day.

When I was in Kharkiv earlier this year, I saw so many buildings completely destroyed.

I stood in rubble where homes used to be.

Where families used to live.

I saw schools moved underground, into metro stations.

It was very moving to see children so eager to learn, and teachers so eager to teach…despite their lives being completely disrupted.

I visited the wounded in hospitals.

Soldiers that lost limbs.

War is brutal and ugly.

War is also very costly in economic terms.

Ukraine is allocating nearly a quarter of its GDP for defence next year.

That is more than 10 times what European NATO Allies spend.

A harsh reminder that freedom does not come for free.

If we don't spend more together now to prevent war, we will pay a much, much, much higher price later to fight it.

Not billions, but trillions of euros.

That's if we come out on top…and that's if we win.

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In politics, there's a time to talk, a time to decide, and a time to act.

I know politicians talk—a lot.

That's what I did today!

They make decisions, when needed.

Sometimes difficult ones.

But to act, people must support those decisions.

It's in your hands.

Today, I call for your support.

Action is urgent.

To protect our freedom, our prosperity, and our way of life, your politicians need to listen to your voices.

Tell them you accept to make sacrifices today so that we can stay safe tomorrow.

Tell them they need to spend more on defence so that we can continue to live in peace.

Tell them that security matters more than anything.

I am confident that collectively at NATO, we can continue to keep our one billion people safe.

We have enormous advantages.

We are 32 allies strong.

Together, NATO allies represent half of the world's economic and military might.

We have exceptional intelligence services.

Innovative industries and businesses.

Some of the best universities and research institutions in the world.

And we have many partners across the globe.

When we put our minds and political will to it, there is nothing we cannot do—Europe and North America together.

Our adversaries think they are tough, and we are soft.

They invade other countries, while we uphold international rules.

They oppress their people, while we cherish freedom.

They should remember that there is no greater power than democracies coming together.

When we are attacked, our response is fierce.

To ensure no one ever considers attacking us, we must maintain long-term deterrence.

We can do this.

We have done it before.

We can do it again.

Thank you very much.

WINNER: ASSOCIATIONS

"The Role of Restaurants in Forging a Polite Society"

By John Patterson for Don Harmon, Illinois Senate President

Delivered at the Illinois Restaurant Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Feb. 27, 2024

Good afternoon all.

Thank you for those kind words, Sam.

It's great to be with you today.

No one throws a better lunch event than the Restaurant Association.

I'd like to begin with a story.

It was the summer of 1982.

• Argentina surrendered to end the Falkland War.

• E.T. the Extra Terrestrial opened in theaters.

• And I got my first job at what was then … and remains today … the iconic Petersen's Ice Cream in Oak Park.

I actually found an old paycheck stub recently while embarking on the empty-nest purging of our attic.

25 and 1/4 hours paid $84.59, minus $5.67 in FICA and another $1.10 in state taxes for a take home grand total of $77.82.

Good times.

My best friend already worked at Petersen's, I believe because all of his sisters were waitresses.

He sold me on how great a gig it was to have at 15, but in retrospect I'm pretty sure he just wanted some company.

If anyone here is unfamiliar with the wonders of Petersen's, it's a more than century old cornerstone of the Oak Park community.

From the glowing neon sign to the black and white tiled floor to the vintage looping metal parlor chairs, Petersen's was a Norman Rockwell painting brought to life.

It's hosted thousands of birthday parties, post-game milkshake runs, been the destination spot for good report card rewards and, in the waning days of the restaurant, the setting of a Barak Obama presidential ad.

And it is where I, over the course of three years, scooped ice cream, washed dishes, bused tables, was a short-order cook, and for one shining, singular moment, broke through as a host.

Back then, no boy had ever held the host position, greeting customers as they came through the door and seating them.

I lobbied extensively for the opportunity.

And one night—it was a slow night—management relented.

To this day, I'm not entirely certain what I did wrong, but it was a one-night gig.

I chalk it up as one of many mysteries of the restaurant industry.

Some lingering takeaways from my first job in food service …

First … It was the stickiest place I ever worked.

At this very moment, I can still feel the milkshake drying on my arms like some kind of sugary long-sleeve shirt.

Second … There is such a thing as too much ice cream.

The tacit deal was, while you worked, you could eat all the ice cream you wanted.

On the first day, this is arguably the greatest fringe benefit ever created in the workplace.

By the end of that first week, you will have consumed a lifetime of ice cream and begin to question if you ever want to taste it again.

Everyone's hometown has a Peterson's.

It might go by a different name, and maybe it's not an ice cream parlor.

It could be a greasy spoon or a fine steakhouse.

I would imagine many of you are thinking of those places right now.

And if you would like to send the names of those establishments to my office, the Illinois Senate Democratic Caucus is always looking for great places to eat.

But this speaks to the value of restaurants in our society.

In the late 1980s, American sociologist Ray Oldenburg coined the term "third places" to refer to the spaces in our lives that are neither home nor work.

These are the places where we find our friends and are free to be our authentic selves.

Think of the coffee shop from Friends.

Or perhaps the bar from Cheers.

These are the places where first dates find love, friendships flourish and revolutionaries plot their next move.

We lost those spaces when COVID hit in 2020.

Nothing was hit harder than our restaurants.

I recognize that.

I think everyone in state government recognizes that.

Illinois created grant programs to offer a lifeline.

The governor ordered tax collections delayed to help.

And restaurants showed their never-ending creativity in the face of adversity.

I remain impressed by the explosion of outdoor dining opportunities and places where restaurants have taken over entire streets.

Let me state the obvious:

Restaurants are vital to a successful Illinois economy.

There are more than 26,000 eating and drinking locations in our state.

The estimated sales top $37 Billion—an amount that's more than half of what our state budget is.

You employ more than a half million workers now, and that number is projected to increase by 12 percent to nearly 630,000 workers by 2030.

I also know that you continue to face challenges as you recover.

I want to be an ally in that recovery because I believe that our communities need restaurants, and the third places they provide, more than ever.

There is something intimate and unique about breaking bread with others.

There's a reason we have meetings over meals.

There's a reason we socialize and make friends over meals.

The late Anthony Bourdain once wrote this about the transformative experience of dining together …

"For a moment, or a second, the pinched expressions of the cynical, world-weary, throat-cutting, miserable bastards we've all had to become disappears when we're confronted with something as simple as a plate of food."

Now, I would never describe my Senate colleagues in any of those colorful terms, but this is why I make it a point to take groups out to dinner, especially when we are in Springfield for session.

You discover over the course of conversation things that you would never learn about a colleague on the Senate floor or in a caucus meeting or negotiating table.

You actually talk to someone and ultimately solve problems with politeness.

For instance, during one recent outing, there was a member with whom I'd had some meaningful disagreements.

And it wasn't a secret.

When I showed up at the restaurant, there this member was, sitting alone in a crowded room.

I very intentionally went over and sat next to them.

Soon, others filled in.

And we had a great conversation.

Crisis averted, problems solved and we moved on, all thanks to a good night at a restaurant.

Now, as much as I hope you enjoyed those stories, I know the tipped wage issue is on the top of your minds and legislative agenda.

Obviously the City of Chicago already took action.

The Senate will be watching how that plays out.

I also know that you remain adamantly opposed.

What I can tell you is that my door is always open and I'm there to listen.

What I appreciate most about the Illinois Restaurant Association is your pragmatic approach to issues.

Decisions are made by those who show up.

And you are always there, with ideas and the facts to back them up.

It's an approach I also utilize in my role.

Because when we sit at a table together and talk, whether in a restaurant or in the Capitol, we end up with a better outcome.

Thank you for the invitation to speak to you today.

And thank you for affording me the trip down memory lane back to my job at Petersen's.

It left me with a sense of nostalgia but also a recognition that when this Senate President thing comes to an end, I might want to consider being a dishwasher again.

Sure, it's a terribly hot, sweaty job, but in a matter of minutes you get to go from mountains of mess to sparkling clean, sanitized and organized.

That provides a real sense of accomplishment that I have to admit, can be hard to come by in my current job.

Thank you and have a great day.

WINNER: BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

"Ten Years Gone"

By Julie Lasson for John C. Williams,
President and CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of New York

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Delivered at the
Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Sept. 26, 2024

Introduction

Welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us. And a special thank you to those who make today's event so powerful: the distinguished speakers, panelists, and event organizers. We have a packed agenda on a variety of important topics, and I look forward to hearing about the progress we've made and priorities for the future.

Ten Years Gone

Today marks our tenth annual U.S. Treasury Market Conference, and a decade of partnership between our agencies. These conferences have proven to be a valuable forum to share insights and perspectives on the evolution of the Treasury market, identify challenges and risks to smooth market functioning, and, most importantly, discuss ways to enhance its resilience and effectiveness in both good times and bad times.

The New York Fed is proud to host this conference each year. It leverages—sorry, I realize that leverage is not a popular word in this crowd—it draws upon our strength as a convener of market participants, academics, policymakers, and central bankers. Today, I'll take a look at how our interagency collaboration has strengthened our understanding of Treasury market resiliency and that of adjacent markets. And I'll talk about the importance of continuing this work over the next decade and beyond. I will also share some news about our ongoing commitment to ensuring that our financial system continues to stand on a strong foundation of sound reference rates.

Now, let me give the standard Fed disclaimer that the views I express today are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) or others in the Federal Reserve System.

Stairway to the Annual Conference

Let's think back to the middle of October 2014, when U.S. Treasury yields plunged and then quickly rebounded, an episode later named the "flash rally."

This episode was an impetus for the drafting of a joint staff report that ultimately led to the inaugural U.S. Treasury Market Conference in 2015. That conference first brought together what is now known as the "Joint Member Agencies" to discuss the evolving structure of the Treasury market. That meeting focused on potential operational risks, regulatory requirements, and repo market considerations. It drew about 300 people—an impressive figure for the first year. I know that some who participated in that conference are here again today.

The organizers recognized that it would be important to have a regular forum to address developments in the Treasury market and adjacent markets, in order to continue to study structural issues and explore ongoing developments as a way to prevent disruptions to the system.

To be clear, attention on the function of the Treasury market didn't start in 2015. In fact, if you read Fed history—a genre of literature that I particularly enjoy—it's clear that the importance of Treasury market functioning was central to the Federal Reserve and the New York Fed for a long time. But what became apparent in more recent times was that as the markets evolved, the need for formal joint-agency collaboration and engagement with the private sector became more pressing.

When the Levee Breaks

What drives all of our efforts—from staff reports, to conferences, to actions, and all the communication in between— is that liquid, well-functioning markets for Treasury and related securities are absolutely essential for credit to flow and the economy to prosper. It's not an overstatement that a well-functioning U.S. Treasury market is critical to our economy, and, in fact, to the entire world.

The Song Remains the Same

What are some of the themes that we've discussed at these conferences, and what's been the impact on our financial system?

Let's take a look back at that first joint staff report. It made the case on two notable fronts. First, it highlighted that principal trading firms played a much larger role in the electronic trading market than was previously understood. Second, it highlighted the need for improved transparency and increased availability of Treasury market data.

Ten years gone, the song remains the same. Those themes are still at the forefront of our conversations. For example, while principal trading firms still continue to be a big presence in the Treasury market, hedge funds now also play an important role. The work monitoring the changing investor base and participant types continues through this forum and the work of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Treasury Market Surveillance and the Financial Stability Oversight Council.

On the data side, we've made tremendous progress toward increased data transparency with the Trade Reporting and Compliance Engine (TRACE) data initiative. And we've seen efforts to further increase the transparency of this data to the public. In March of this year, TRACE began publishing daily transaction data on on-the-run securities at the end of the day. In fact, at this very podium last year, I said that we must continue to prioritize transparency and clarity in financial data, especially in the age of AI, when the sources of data are harder to ascertain.

I'd be remiss if I did not mention expanded central clearing as another key theme that has emerged over the years. This is a major shift that is an outgrowth of our work. We'll hear more about that in a panel discussion later today, and I look forward to the continued progress the market will make on this front as we move toward the implementation deadlines of the SEC's clearing rule.

What Is and What Should Never Be

Before I cede the stage, I will end on a topic that is at the core of the financial system and closely connected to the Treasury market: reference rates. Thankfully, we have said good riddance to LIBOR, and our financial system is now resting on a safe and solid foundation.

I know I promised not to bring up LIBOR again at this conference. But the LIBOR saga taught us all two important lessons. First, enormous systemic risk can build in the global financial system gradually over time, and second, it took a complex, expensive, decade-long effort to fix that problem. We must not repeat that experience.

To that end, I am pleased to announce that today, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York is launching the Reference Rate Use Committee, or RRUC. It will convene private market participants to support integrity, efficiency, and resiliency in the use of interest rate benchmarks—or reference rates—across financial markets, including the rates published by the New York Fed. Its first meeting will occur in October.

The RRUC will focus on key issues regarding reference rates, including how their use is evolving and how the markets underpinning them may be changing too. It will promote best practices related to the use of reference rates, including the recommendations set out by the Alternative Reference Rates Committee (ARRC) during the transition away from LIBOR. In this way, the RRUC will serve as an essential partnership that builds upon the work and accomplishments of the ARRC, by helping to preserve a robust system of reference rates. This work will complement international efforts at the Bank for International Settlements and the Financial Stability Board to monitor developments in the use of interest rate benchmarks and ensure that we never have to face a problem like LIBOR again.

Bring It On Home

I will now bring it on home. We are now at the bridge to the next 10 years of the U.S. Treasury Market Conference. Although there has been significant progress, the growth and evolution of this market remind us of the importance of staying focused on this work and continuing to make progress in the years ahead. In an era of heightened uncertainty and volatility, it is essential that the U.S. Treasury market remain liquid and resilient, so that all financial markets can operate effectively. If you were ever in doubt of how important this is, the experience of the past several years should convince you otherwise.

Thank you, and I look forward to today's conference, and to another decade of partnership and success.

WINNER: EDUCATORS

"Bumper Sticker Format, Please!"

By Søren Stein for Henrik C. Wegener, Rector, University of Copenhagen

//

Delivered at the University of Copenhagen's annual Professors' Dinner, Jan. 25, 2024

Dear Professors

I must profess, delivering what is normally expected after two glasses of wine—a happy and jolly dinner speech—is not easy in times of trouble.

The last couple of Professor Dinners have been shaped by the pandemic,

the war in Ukraine and terrifying emission projections—not to mention US presidential election projections.

And now: the horrible, horrible events in Israel and Gaza.

That will be my topic for tonight.

The 7 October massacre and ensuing war have repercussions on campus life all over the world.

I attended the 4EU+ annual meeting with fellow European Rectors in Milan when we were disrupted by a student group with Palestinian flags and banners, shouting into a megaphone in Italian.

I assure you—it did NOT sound like a Puccini aria.

We let them deliver their messages, Milan's Rector made a few kind comparisons with 1968.

And after a few more interruptions from the students, we moved the meeting to another room, with limited access.

In America, the implications have been substantial.

At Columbia, student groups were dissolved.

At Cornell, the police placed a Jewish studies center under guard.

And two prominent university Presidents from Harvard and Penn resigned, following a Congress hearing.

As you know, Congresswoman Stefanik pushed the presidents to say whether "calling for the genocide of Jews" violated their institutions' rules:

"Yes or no?".

They failed to provide clear answers, causing outrage.

In America, there is talk of big donor meddling with university governance.

At least in Denmark, public universities are off that hook.

But we have also seen clashes on campus, not nearly as vocal though.

In Odense, there have been disputes about Israeli and Palestinian flags on bulletin boards—as well as posters with awful pictures comparing Gaza with the Holocaust.

And at our law faculty, a drawing resembling a Swastika was discovered on a whiteboard.

How should we respond to these incidents?

Carol Christ, the Chancellor of Berkeley, may be a good adviser coming from a university with a record of student turmoil dating back to the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam war.

When she was hired some 30 years ago, she was told not to prepare coursework for the last three weeks of the term.

Why?

Because the students would always be on strike that time of year.

Chancelor Christ has a formula for university leadership which I think is rather useful.

—1. Create a sense of community for ALL students.

—2. Express sympathy and compassion.

—3. Don't take sides.

Christ says there are nonetheless "moral absolutes" that need to be addressed—like the 7 October massacre and that babies and grandmothers are innocent.

Which is basically what we have tried to do here in Copenhagen issuing statements of compassion and condemning (symbols of) anti-semitism, hate speech and incitement to violence.

But whether we like it or not, universities are still seen as passive or even submissive to specific agendas.

It may come down to a culture gap.

The simplicity and pace of the media VERSUS the lengthy thoughtfulness of the university.

There's a story in the New Yorker magazine.

Its about a professor of history at Columbia, Manan Ahmed.

He has severe problems as he prepares to take part in a demonstration protesting the suspension of Palestinian and Jewish student groups.

He sends a text to his colleagues—classicists, anthropologists, historians—asking them: "Do you know where I can find a megaphone?"

They have no clue.

He says:

"We know how to track down medieval scrolls in dusty archives.

But we have no goddam idea how to organise a protest."

The professor struggles to fit all his messages on a poster—his five demands are too wordy to be seen from the distance.

As he concludes: "Academics don't do bumper stickers."

The story in Martin Krasnik's new book is similar.

Our alumnus and chief editor at Weekendavisen drives his car to a demonstration venue.

He wants to protest against the Netanyahu Government and the settlers.

But he stays in the car, observing the demonstration from the distance.

Krasnik is not comfortable in crowds.

The complexity of the conflict the complexity of his arguments are

blurred by "bumper sticker" rhetoric he doesn't approve.

It goes without saying that faculty—like all citizens—can join any demo of their liking.

And there is no contradiction between conducting science with integrity—and being committed to a cause.

As long as personal opinions in demonstrations and petitions are carefully labelled as such—and not attributed to the university.

Essentially, there is no better place for complex discussions than a university.

We teach hard facts.

We encourage civic dialogue—and the art of listening.

We teach our students to challenge their own preconceptions.

And we teach them the value of understanding opposing views—as a way to develop your own view.

Therefore, universities should not withdraw because the debate is nasty.

On the contrary, the debate will get even nastier if universities retreat.

Let me give you an example from the *Wall Street Journal*.

Berkeley Professor Ron Hassner, recently explored the common chant "From the River to the Sea".

He hired a survey firm to poll 250 college students across the US.

[Colleagues in this room will already question the size of the sample].

33 per cent answered that they supported the slogan "enthusiastically" and 53 per cent "to a lesser degree".

But only half the students who embraced the slogan were able to name the river and the sea—with answers including the Nile and the Atlantic Ocean.

However, after being told a few basic facts about the Middle East, 68 per cent went from supporting "From the River to the Sea" to rejecting the mantra.

As the Berkeley professor concluded:

"It is time for good teachers to combat bias with facts".

I guess colleagues in this crowd will be curious to see if Hassner's "basic facts" could be seen as biased as well.

And I presume he will be happy to share the data.

Thankfully, our university is also staffed by good teachers able to clarify facts and navigate political minefields.

Liora Sion is a good case in point.

There's a piece about her in Universitetsavisen.

Liora is an Israeli national and faculty at our Middle East Programme at TORS (the Humanities) where she teaches Hebrew.

She knows that many students are engaged on the Palestinian side, but she has only met respect and understanding in the classroom.

Outside campus? Different story.

On social media she gets a lot of anger.

The Muslim community attacks her Israeli background.

And the Israeli community attacks her for not supporting the Netanyahu government which she calls "dangerous" and "fascist".

When she organized a debate on the war in December, she was criticized for not having a researcher with Palestinian background on the panel.

But as she explained, because there are no Palestinian researchers (and experts) in Denmark she had invited colleagues from Sweden—who refused to talk with her, simply because she is Israeli.

Liori's experience made me think about the nature of academic freedom and how things are handled differently in America and in Denmark.

Would we ever suspend student groups as they did at Columbia?

Liori says that she understands the students yelling and demonstrating.

It's part of being in your 20s, feeling you fight a just cause, feeling you make a difference.

I think she makes an important point.

And I think we should be grateful for having faculty like her.

It takes a lot of guts and perseverance to keep up the academic work in a polarized world.

Forgive me for giving so many faculty cases.

From Milano to Berkeley, Columbia, Odense and Copenhagen.

It is hard to keep track of them, especially in a dinner speech.

But we need to learn from a plurality of perspectives that transcend the black and white template of most media coverage.

Finally, to sum up my key messages,

I will propose a few "bumper sticker" slogans—and then I will ask you to discuss them at the tables.

You are very much encouraged to criticize my slogans and propose better ones.

But more than anything else, I encourage you to engage in lengthy discussions that will never fit into a poster at a demonstration.

Bumper sticker 1:

"The University is not a safe space—but a safe place for academic arguments."

Bumper sticker 2:

Just because you have the right to say something, that doesn't mean its right to say (that thing)."

Bumper sticker 3:

"The University of Copenhagen will not accept (symbols of/or calls for) anti-semitism, islamophobia or genocide in political manifestations on campus."

Bumper sticker 4:

"Faculty can show and discuss Swastikas and other sensitive symbols and words in the classroom in the relevant academic context."

As you can hear, my slogans get longer and longer.

So I better stop.

And if I ever get summoned to a congressional hearing, I will ask you to send me the summaries of your discussions—in bumper sticker format, please.

Thank you!

WINNER: ENERGY

"To the Refinery Managers of the Future"

By Paul Saville for Amber Russell,
Senior Vice President, Refining, bp

//

Delivered at ESF North America Energy Sustainability Forum,
New Orleans, May 31, 2024

Hello, everyone.

My name is Amber Russell.

I head up bp's global refining, terminals and pipelines business.

I'm from Arkansas and I love this part of the world.

It's a pleasure to be here today—and a pleasure to be back close to home.

I grew up on a farm, so I know all about good, honest, hard work.

And today, my team and bp are working hard for America.

In the US, we run two refineries…

Whiting in Indiana…

Which John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company opened way back in 1889.

And Cherry Point in Washington State.

Which opened its gates in 1971.

Together, they process nearly 700,000 barrels of oil a day.

Support more than 100,000 jobs.

And they provide products people rely on in their daily lives.

bp invests more here than anywhere else in the world.

And employs more people here than anywhere else.

And, we have a connection with, and commitment to, the communities we serve.

That's always been the case in our refining towns.

This letter I'm holding today is a great example.

I was fortunate to come across it a few weeks ago.

It was written by a man named J.H. Johnsen.

He used to be the manager at the Sugar Creek refinery in Missouri.

It was operated by Amoco, which later merged with bp.

As the city's refinery manager, Mr Johnsen was a pillar of the community.

A good neighbour.

And in 1970, he was asked to write a letter to be placed in a time capsule.

A time capsule from Sugar Creek residents to be opened 50 years later.

Mr Johnsen decided to write about his work.

His letter was titled: To the Sugar Creek refinery manager in the year 2020.

In it, Mr Johnsen wrote that the Sugar Creek refinery was "up to date, according to 1970s standards."

With "modern crude distillation" and "modern gas-blending facilities."

And looking to the future, he wrote that:

"We can only hope that some of the innovations and procedures we are employing in 1970 are laying the foundations for the wonders you now probably take for granted."

Mr Johnsen and his team certainly did set the strong foundations for our business today.

And he was clearly thinking beyond his job in 1970.

To a time in the future.

What Mr Johnsen describes is also the job of the refiners of today.

To operate as good neighbours to the communities they serve now...

While working on the innovations that will serve the refiners and communities in the future.

That's what we are striving to achieve at bp.

And, if I was replying to Mr Johnsen's letter,

I'd write how grateful I was for his foresight…

For his work to help lay the foundations for our business today.

And, how excited I am to see us adapt again.

To work on the innovations to serve the next 50 to 100 years.

Redefining refineries at a time of great change for the industry.

That's what we need to do now…

As the world seeks to transition to a secure, affordable and lower-carbon energy system.

I'm really proud to know that my team—bp refining—has a central role in that.

We see real opportunities to make our refineries a platform for building new and competitive lower-carbon businesses.

And that all starts from making sure that our refineries today are operating safely...

And that they are as competitive as they can be.

Let me tell you a bit more about this.

First—and always first—is safety.

Safe, reliable and compliant operations.

We want no fatalities…

No life-changing injuries…

And no serious process safety events.

Put simply, we want our people to be able to go home safe and well to their loved ones every day.

It's the very least they should expect from us.

But, as we all know, refining is a high-hazard industry.

So, we must always be vigilant.

When Whiting refinery suffered challenges earlier this year…

We lived and breathed the vigilance I talk about.

We were quick to establish what the problem was.

And careful in making sure that we corrected it.

As frustrating as the outage was, keeping Whiting offline was the right thing to do for the community.

We had to make sure that it was safe before coming online again.

Safety comes first, always. As you'd expect.

After safety, comes a rigorous focus on being competitive.

Competitive, by focusing on the activities that create the most value.

Competitive, by creating efficiencies through better use of technology.

And competitive, by increasing margins and decreasing spend.

Easier said than done, I know.

But we know that if you don't have competitive costs, you don't stand the test of time.

So, we are focused on understanding where we spend our money and what good looks like.

That's how we take care of business.

And taking care of business is also about growth… sustainable growth.

Refineries have a vital job to do today…

Producing the fuels and products that keep America and the world moving, as they've done for the past 150 years.

But at the same time, there is the chance of a lifetime to redefine what refineries do…

That comes with a tremendous opportunity for long-term sustainable growth.

Let me tell you something about what we're doing at bp.

Let's start at Cherry Point.

Already, it processes around 250,000 barrels of crude oil each day.

Products that US folks rely on.

But, as well as that, Cherry Point is producing renewable diesel.

Fuels with lower lifecycle emissions than traditional fuels.

We're doing that through the production of biofuels, partly through something called 'co-processing'.

As many of you will know…

In co-processing, the refinery uses conventional crude oil alongside ingredients like food waste and beef tallow to produce a blended fuel.

It's one of the most efficient ways to reduce a fuel's lifecycle emissions.

In fact, co-processed renewable diesel can reduce the fuel's carbon intensity by up to 30% compared with regular, fossil fuel-created diesel.

Cherry Point is a shining example of bp's strategy to transition from an international oil company to an integrated energy company.

Able to offer a range of solutions to customers.

And just like in America, this transformation is taking shape across our global sites.

Over in the Netherlands, our Rotterdam refinery has a long legacy of providing much-needed hydrocarbons across Europe.

bp has been in the country for 70 years.

And our refinery is one of the largest in Western Europe, processing 400,000 barrels of oil every single day.

Alongside the hydrocarbon production, Rotterdam has been co-processing bio feedstocks since 2017.

The result of which has seen a reduction in the carbon intensity of the site.

The Rotterdam refinery is also well located.

Located to connect to future infrastructure in the Netherlands for hydrogen and CO2 capture.

Creating even more low-carbon options.

The examples at Rotterdam and Cherry Point are refineries that are on their way to becoming—what we call—integrated energy hubs.

These will be, in essence, refineries that offer a range of solutions to meet customer demand.

Let me finish up by going back to Mr Johnsen's letter.

Fifty years ago, he wrote about refineries being good at adapting.

He called it our heritage.

He said that the encouraging thing is that the human mind and spirit always refuse to be defeated by problems.

That is so true—even more so today, when we need to adapt even more.

Not just adapt... but change.

We talk about redefining refining at bp.

The world wants and needs more and more lower-carbon fuels—and refineries can deliver on that.

At the same time, they are vital to keeping the world moving with the fuels and products it needs today.

It's exactly what we are doing at bp.

Redefining refineries to create new businesses in biofuels, hydrogen and other low-carbon solutions.

And in so doing, we are…

Growing the role that refineries play in the energy transition…

And a more sustainable energy system of the future.

Growing the opportunities to keep refineries at the heart of the community…

Powering the economy and providing great jobs for good, hard-working people.

And, we are also growing the value of bp…

As we invest in the energy system of today, while helping to build the system of tomorrow.

I hope that would be a legacy that Mr Johnsen—and the refiners before him—would be proud of.

Thank you for listening.

WINNER: GOVERNMENT

"The Magical Future of Aviation: Sustainability, Innovation, and Connected Community"

By Deandra Brooks for Laurence Wildgoose, Assistant Administrator, Policy, International Affairs and Environment, FAA // Delivered at the Singapore Aerospace Technology and Engineering Conference, Feb. 21, 2024

Chairman Ng [ING], distinguished guests, thank you for inviting me to share my thoughts on the future of aviation. It is always a pleasure to spend time with you, my dear colleagues in the Asia Pacific region.

But, before I start, I want to remind you that what we do is magical.

I left my house outside Washington, DC last Thursday, and the next day, I landed here—in Singapore—on the other side of the world.

When most people drive to the airport, they don't think about the engineering that went into certifying the aircraft they are about to board. They don't wonder if the airport has been inspected. They don't question the skill or training of the flight crew. And they don't think about the hours of negotiation that went into the agreements that support nearly 250 direct flights from the U.S. to Singapore on a monthly basis.

So, what do they think about on the way to the airport? They think about what movie they will watch before they take a nap. Why? Because what we do is magical!

But it is not just magical: our global aerospace partnerships have created an ecosystem that makes safe, reliable air transportation commonplace. We took ideas that existed only in imaginations and cartoons and made it the reality for many.

The ability to wake up on one continent and go to bed in another—on the other side of the world the very next day—is not only commonplace, it is expected. And that makes me wonder…

When you work in an industry that is already beyond what anyone could have ever imagined—one built on decades of incremental enhancements that often go unnoticed, supported by data that is shared to create a positive safety culture, and now connects every corner of the world—how do we make it even better?

We ensure that we are handing the next generation a strong aerospace ecosystem that they can build upon. We make it more sustainable, more equitable, and more connected. In short, we make it even more magical.

Now, I cannot take credit for the idea of making a magical place more magical. That credit belongs to The Walt Disney Company.

Disney has been making magic happen for decades, but as an aviation guy, one of my favorite examples is a recent one.

Their amusement parks are famous for their nighttime fireworks displays.

But since 2016, they've been experimenting with replacing the fireworks with drones. And last month, the Disneyland Park in Paris debuted the iconic Main Street Electrical Parade as a drone show.

Drones add magic, but they don't pollute like fireworks do. They don't have a negative effect on our air quality or the potential to contaminate the waterways they fly over.

More magic, but also more sustainability.

And sustainability is key to making our aerospace system future-proof.

Let me assure you, the United States is committed to achieving a more sustainable transportation future.

In November of 2021, our transportation secretary, the Honorable Pete Buttigieg, announced the most recent U.S. Aviation Climate Action Plan. That plan laid out a very clear goal: net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from the U.S. aviation sector by 2050.

We all know that one country alone can't improve the sustainability of the global aviation system, so we have encouraged our partners within ICAO to adopt this goal, too. More importantly, we are working together to make this goal less aspirational, and more achievable.

Some solutions are coming from technological innovation—more efficient aircraft and engine technologies that reduce fuel burn, lower emissions, and lessen noise impacts on local communities.

So, how does the FAA, a safety regulator, spark this innovation?

Answer: collaboration!

We partner with industry and international stakeholders to make the magic happen.

The Continuous Lower Energy, Emissions and Noise Program—also known as CLEEN, spelled C-L-E-E-N—uses a cost-sharing approach to enable industry to expedite integration of environmentally beneficial technologies into current and future aircraft.

CLEEN is already in the middle of its third phase. This is a five-year, $125 million program that requires participants to match or exceed the government's investment.

Modeling conducted by the Georgia Institute of Technology projected that by 2050, the first two phases of the CLEEN Program will result in 43 billion gallons of fuel saved and a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of more than 400 million metric tons. The modeling also shows that landing take-off nitrogen oxide emissions will be reduced by 2.79 megatons through 2050.

Innovation in the aircraft isn't enough to get us to that more sustainable future, however. So, we are also

focused on accelerating the production and use of sustainable aviation fuels or "SAF."

Along with our colleagues in the U.S. Departments of Energy and Agriculture, we are leading the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Grand Challenge to dramatically accelerate the use of sustainable aviation fuels.

Our goal is to scale up the production of SAF to 35 billion gallons per year by 2050. This would allow us to meet 100% of the projected domestic jet fuel demand.

The FAA's Fueling Aviation's Sustainable Transition, or "FAST" SAF grant program includes $244 million to support the build-out of infrastructure projects related to SAF production, transportation, blending, and storage. An additional $46 million in FAA grants will fund FAST-Tech grants for aviation technology.

The first round of FAST applications were due last December, and we received more than 120 submissions! We anticipate awarding the first set of grants later this year.

The FAA has put a significant amount of energy and activity behind our sustainability efforts, but we see industry doing it too. And I'm not just talking about traditional airlines.

The FAA is working with a new generation of aviators who will operate electric vehicles. These vehicles will provide environmental benefits and also have the potential to make air transportation—and the benefits it provides—more equitable.

We are already seeing more access to the skies with over 352,000 commercial drones that are operating in the United States.

Drones can be a more cost-effective solution to getting an "eye in the sky" to see terrain, buildings, crops—well, anything under 400 feet in most cases.

Drone package delivery is taking off and is expected to grow exponentially once rules for routine beyond visual line-of-sight (BVLOS) operations are completed.

For more rural areas, these new entrants have the potential to expand air transportation options, expedite the delivery of medication and other important goods, and improve infrastructure monitoring. In urban areas, new entrants can take cars off the roads, reducing travel times, congestion, and air pollution.

And these are the not the benefits of some far-off, imagined Tomorrowland.

Drones are already changing the way we prepare for and respond to natural disasters and wildfires.

Drones were pandemic heroes—providing contactless delivery of personal protective equipment, vaccines, and other important goods. And drones are sparking the aviation bug in students from elementary school to university.

We have been working through the aircraft certification process with several advanced air mobility, or AAM, manufacturers, and we have a plan in place to support integrated AAM operations at one or more locations in the U.S. by 2028.

As our industry evolves and adopts new aircraft types with new capabilities, the FAA has to evolve too. This means making our national airspace system and the infrastructure that supports it more agile.

Near-term, you will see us testing capabilities—like the unmanned traffic management operational evaluation in the Dallas, Texas area.

We will utilize this program to validate the use of unmanned traffic management to mitigate drone-to-drone collision risk for BVLOS operations.

This program will also evaluate several areas for which established policy does not yet exist. It will generate data that will help the FAA, operators, and local community leaders.

Drones and AAM vehicles are helping to make our physical transportation systems more equitable. But there is additional work that the FAA has to do to make itself more equitable…

I'm talking about the importance of diversity. We need to bring as many people into the industry as we can. It's not just the right thing to do, we're safer and stronger when we have people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives working together to solve increasingly complex challenges.

Study after study has established that more diverse organizations are more innovative, more productive, and more successful.

The need to be a more diverse organization is not the stuff of Tomorrowland. Why?

Because there are complex challenges that we need to address in order to future-proof our aviation system. We need innovative solutions now! And, we need a range of viewpoints to address transportation network inequities now!

So, we are working to build a pipeline that will bring more diverse viewpoints into the aerospace industry. The FAA is investing in educational outreach through our nationwide Adopt-a-School program, aviation career academies, and even gaming, using Microsoft's Minecraft for our annual Airport Design Challenge.

The FAA's Minority Serving Institutions Internship Program has been placing incredibly bright college students in our offices, and a number of these students have applied for and been hired as full time FAA employees.

One of our recent efforts, the Samya Rose Stumo National Air Grant Fellowship Program, launched in January 2023. This program provides graduate students with a unique opportunity to work at the forefront of national aerospace policy within the executive and legislative branches of our government.

Our inaugural cohort completed their fellowships last month and 100 percent of participating fellows found permanent jobs in the FAA. We just kicked off the second cohort, and I am looking forward to seeing what they accomplish.

These programs don't just benefit the FAA…they benefit the whole industry.

A more sustainable aviation system that puts equity—both in the skies and in the workforce—ensuring safety in those skies—helps to generate that last bit of additional magic—a more connected aerospace system.

I was able to come here, from Washington, DC, because our international airspace system is seamless, as it should be…

Since 1944, ICAO has fostered international cooperation to achieve harmonization in civil aviation regulations, standards, procedures, and organizations.

And achieving the aerospace system of the future is going to require even more cooperation and coordination—but at a speed and pace that is unprecedented.

Just talking to one another isn't enough. We need to be collaborative partners—we need a more connected community.

The FAA is committed to deepening its engagement across the globe, and we are constantly looking at our international footprint to see if there are better ways to collaborate.

Last year, we opened a new FAA office in Mexico City. And, I am very optimistic about our plan to open a new FAA office in the Asia Pacific region later this year.

This is particularly exciting because while we are a pacific nation, we've never had a permanent presence in the Oceania region, and it will allow us to strengthen our partnerships with Oceania and the Pacific Islands. As a pacific nation, we manage over 21 million square miles of airspace and share 11 flight information region boundaries in the Pacific with our neighbors, thus requiring our close coordination and collaboration to ensure our operations are harmonized.

The most pressing issues facing our industry—sustainability, safe integration of new entrants, and the diversity of our future workforce—are big. And they don't stop at geographic boundaries.

[PAUSE]

This is not a competition; we all have to win. We need to deepen our connections and make our collaboration meaningful.

And even though I enjoyed it, I didn't fly here from DC to get caught up on the latest movies.

I am here to connect with you!

And later this week, when I fly home, I won't think about the navigational aids… or the air traffic clearances… or the strength of the runway.

I'll think about the conversations we had… the ideas we shared… and the connections I made, so that we can make this magical system all the more so.

Thank you.

WINNER: MILITARY

"Receiving the Carnegie Wateler Peace Prize on Behalf of the Netherlands Armed Forces"

By Emma Anbeek for
General Onno Eichelsheim, Chief of Defence

//

Delivered at Peace Palace,
The Hague, Nov. 26, 2024

Thank you so much, I am honoured to receive the Carnegie Wateler Peace prize on behalf of the Netherlands Armed Forces. The award of this prize gives me the opportunity to showcase the many sides of our Armed Forces: not just the strong muscle and the resilient mindset… but also the human heart that beats at the centre of our Armed Forces.

But first, let me go back in time. In 1913, the Peace Palace opened its doors.

Many nations had donated outstanding works of art, so that future generations could bask in the beauty of this Palace. A palace dedicated to peace—the most priceless gift to pass on to future generations.

Tsarist Russia donated an impressive vase that weighs over 3,000 kilos.

France donated a painting called "The Glorification of Peace", with the Goddess of Peace keeping the God of War firmly subdued beneath her feet.

In the same year that the Peace Palace opened its doors, 17 Dutch servicemen set foot in the newly formed state of Albania—just after the First Balkan War had ended. Their assignment was to train the recently established gendarmerie, and thus contribute to restoring order and stability. This would be the Netherlands' first peace mission.

Alas: the 17 Dutch peacekeepers were soon sucked into conflict. Major Lodewijk Thomson was the first Dutch soldier to be killed during a peace mission—on June 15th, 1914. To this day, you will find Albanians who remember him as the man who fought for their freedom. And soon after his death, the First World War started—the ultimate escalation of the rising tensions between the states of Europe.

The peace mission in Albania encapsulated what we would see in the missions yet to come:

- the military is tasked with accomplishing a political vision;
- arrives in a post-conflict situation;
- with escalation looming;
- caused by the parties already present, but also created purely by the presence of peacekeepers;
- who are working on the tipping point between war and peace;
- balancing between power and powerlessness;
- and yet, the civilians feel immense gratitude because you are there to help them out.

Complexity is inherent to peace missions. During the first Dutch peace mission, an officer died during the fighting that took place. But in peace missions today, the presence of our

military—of soldiers trained to fight—can keep fighting at bay. We use hard power to keep soft power in place.

The Netherlands Armed Forces have participated in multiple peace missions, and still do. I am incredibly proud of what they are accomplishing—and have accomplished in these complex situations.

You already mentioned MINUSMA, where 6,000 of our men and women served. Let me give a few other examples:

• The cooling effect that our infantry company of Marines achieved in Bosnia and Herzegovina recently;

• Training the Peshmerga in Iraq;

• Participation in EU-missions to secure the waters off the coast of Somalia, as you mentioned;

• The Netherlands School for Peace Operations, which provides training courses for international United Nations military observers and courses for civilians who will be deployed to high risk areas, such as personnel from the International Criminal Court, and the Dutch Association of Journalists.

I am also proud of what our servicemen and women manage to accomplish outside of peace missions, in the name of a stable and peaceful future:

1. The Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal Service, which is deployed about 2,500 times a year to dismantle the silent but deadly leftovers of war and criminal activities. They put themselves at risk to prevent explosions that would have affected a great many people.

2. Our gender advisor, contributing to UNIFIL in Lebanon, who is striving to get more female soldiers involved in operations.

3. In Togo, four Dutch service members contributed to the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) training mission.

4. Recently, men and women from the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee were sent to Ukraine to investigate alleged war crimes—in close proximity to unpredictable turmoil, hybrid intrigue and devastating violence.

5. I also think of the many times I see servicemen and women rolling up their sleeves to help civilians in dealing with the effects of the climate crisis, whether it's floods in Limburg; hurricanes in the Caribbean; the earthquake in Turkey; or forest fires in Albania.

Often, they are joined by reservists, who contribute to the Armed Forces on a part-time basis.

And I would also like to mention a few other missions and operations, that illustrate the diversity of our effort:

• The almost 29,000 Dutch servicemen and women who served in Afghanistan, until 2021; I was pleased to hear you mention their efforts just now.

• Let me also mention the ongoing efforts of our Marines, Commandos and Marechaussee as part of the Special Intervention Service, dealing with terrorist incidents and other violent public order disruptions—such as the shooting at a hospital in Rotterdam last year.

• Our contribution to the EU's Operation Aspides, which aims to ensure freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

• The 280 Dutch military personnel who are posted to a multinational battlegroup in Lithuania, as part of a reassurance measures for the Eastern European Allies of NATO.

• The recurrent military escort of Russian ships when they enter the North Sea.

• And the ongoing training that we provide to Ukrainian military personnel. I see how far our servicemen and women go to provide them with the best training possible, knowing that they will have to go back to Ukraine to fight in a war their country never asked for.

In all of these missions, operations and training activities, I see immense discipline and perseverance—combined with a limitless loyalty to one's brothers and sisters in arms.

I see how our men and women in uniform choose to push themselves as individuals—and contribute to a greater good. This is the human heart beating at the centre of the Armed Forces. It's the heart that starts beating louder when we're able to use our strength to help others. To use our force for good. To be extremely demanding of yourself, becoming the toughest, strongest and bravest version of yourself—not for your own good, but for the protection of humanity.

That's why it can be so detrimental to soldiers when they can't be as effective as they would want.

I have therefore chosen the ARQ National Psychotrauma Centre as the recipient for the Carnegie Wateler Peace Prize money. The centre does incredibly meaningful work to help those affected by war and humanitarian disasters; including refugees, journalists, ambulance workers, police, and veterans.

Let me go into more a bit more detail about these veterans.

Dr. Molendijk told us about the moral challenges that our men and women in uniform sometimes need to deal with. I applaud those who find the courage to talk about their physical or mental wounds. Especially because I find it hard to do, myself. Thirty years ago, I was sent to Bosnia as an Air Force pilot. I witnessed the violence people can inflict on each other when they see the other as inhuman. To this day, it is seared into my memory: the darkest corners of humanity. I still remember the smells, the sounds and the sights of that war. Of what happened there. Every day. That's why I still try to avoid passing through Bosnia on land, if I have to visit Greece for example.

I know that many veterans who were active in Bosnia—and many other countries—feel the same.

Having seen war with my own eyes keeps me motivated every day to make sure that we are ready to defend ourselves. And seeing the darkness of war helped me to appreciate the light even more. Peace. Freedom. Democracy. Rule of law. Humanity towards each other.

These are elements that are also crucial to the modus operandi of the Netherlands Armed Forces. To all of us, as leaders, as teammates: always show humanity. In the way we fight: never use unnecessary force; uphold the rules of engagement and the rules of warfare; treat our enemy captives with humanity and respect.

We will never lose sight of what we aim to protect: a free democracy, international rule of law, the sovereignty of states. We will continue to participate in missions that seek to safeguard and promote these values. We are the only country in the world that has enshrined the development of the international legal order in its constitution. And the Dutch are immensely proud of this Peace Palace, home to the United Nations International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

I know that for some, it may be strange to see someone in a military uniform talking about peace. They may expect me to talk about warfighting, missiles and counter drones, trenches and ammunition. And I do talk about that. A lot. I have to.

The international rule of law is under pressure. The sovereignty of states is being disrespected by those who wish to gain influence by inflicting violence. War is inching closer to us day by day. So we need to stand ready to defend the light in which we have lived in freedom, for 80 years.

In order to keep our peace, it is up to us to prepare for war. It is our duty as servicemen and women to be able to mount a defence, with the use of force, if necessary, if and when diplomacy is exhausted. To be that big stick, when soft words are no longer heard. And to be diplomacy's teammate, when it comes to peace talks. We know all too well that peace can be fought for, but must in the end be agreed to, by all parties involved. And meaningful peace talks can only take place when there is a balance of power.

I think all Dutch civilians hope that war won't come close to us. But Dutch servicemen and women cannot only hope for the best; it is their duty to also prepare for the worst. We must be able to see and understand the darkest corners of our enemy's minds. This is the unique combination within the Armed Forces: wanting to prevent war, but also needing to be ready to fight—and win.

Our aim is deterrence: scaring off any enemies because we are well trained, well equipped, well-staffed and well aware. Because in a way, we find ourselves close to 1913: basking in the beauty of peace, but also finding ourselves closer and closer to the heat of a much wider war in Europe.

The Armed Forces will stand ready, strong and stable in an unstable situation. Willing to fight, but striving for peace. Because peace must not become a mere pipe dream for the next generations.

Today, I am immensely proud that the Carnegie Wateler Peace Prize recognises that unique combination within the Armed Forces: strength and humanity. I am very pleased that our men and women in uniform are receiving appreciation for their hard work; their dedication to a greater good. In the near future, they will be asked to show it more and more…

And I think of that painting again: 'The Glorification of Peace'. Its colours are monochrome, and to me, this is a reminder that every generation has a chance to fill in the colours: to keep peace alive, to stand up against aggression and lawlessness; to make sure that the God of War is firmly held down under the feet of the Goddess of Peace.

Thank you, for recognising the enormous effort that Dutch servicemen and women put into ensuring peace.

WINNER: NONPROFIT

"President's Story"

By Glen Slattery for Mike Mantel,
President and CEO, Living Water International

//

Delivered at
Laguna Beach, California, May 16, 2024

Someone recently asked how I came to lead Living Water International. The answer starts this way: water is in my blood.

Now of course water is in everyone's blood—about 85%, in fact. But my percentage is probably higher.

My people came to America from the Netherlands, a nation whose close relationship with H20 is built right into its below sea-level name. More than half of that low-lying the country would be underwater were it not for its stout network of canals, dikes, and pumps.

A first-generation American, I grew up in a much drier place: Modesto, California, home to E&J Gallo, largest winery in the world. Grapes grow well there—along with many other agricultural products. The community is surrounded by rich farmland.

Modesto has, as I say, an arid climate. The secret to unlocking the area's bounty is water. A belief reflected in local culture—and on an archway over a downtown street that reads: "Water, Wealth, Contentment, Health."

I passed beneath that arch many times as a child. It's rhyming message clearly got to me, because here I am as leader of Living Water International—a cause devoted to making this vital natural resource available in the world's hardest, driest places.

Of course it helped that my father ran a sprinkler installation company, irrigating local farms and orchards, as well as the Gallo vineyard—jobs I helped with growing up. So I had an early and extended education about the power and potential of water.

But first I wanted to get rich. So I enrolled at Calvin College in Michigan—the only college in America as far as my Dutch Calvinist family was concerned—to earn a degree in business.

After graduating I made my way to another Michigan institution—corporate headquarters of Domino's—the pizza, not the sugar—eventually becoming their director of operations. And got to know Tom Monahan, the amazing entrepreneur who founded the company.

Tom put me in charge of special events, conferences and farm operations. This last being Domino's Farms, an agriculture-themed tourist attraction we lit up big time at Christmas, complete with the world's longest nativity scene, attracting over 100,000 visitors.

In addition to raising awareness about Domino's and—we hoped—pizza intake—the farm collected money for charity. All those tourists gave quite a few dollars.

At which point I found myself in Senegal, West Africa. With a man named Max who had sold me a windmill.

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That, my friends, is what's known as a cliffhanger. But I won't leave you in suspense until next week's episode. It went like this.

My boss, Tom, a supporter of many fine causes, had sponsored a project to drill water wells in Africa. Specifically in the Missouri-sized nation of Senegal, a third of which is desert.

The initiative involved several players. World Vision, a Gospel-sharing aid group. A crew of well diggers from Britain. Plus Max—one of only two windmill manufacturers in the entire U.S.

He already sold us one windmill for the educational petting zoo at Domino's Farms, which I liked because it showed kids how wind power can draw water up from a well. But Max the magnate had bigger plans. He wanted to build windmills for Africa.

I never knew how he got the idea. But there he was, chain-smoking in my office—you could do that back then—with a dream. Financed by tourist-donated spare change from Domino Farms.

Max asked if I wanted to see the windmill in action. So now I'm on the edge of the Sahel Desert, trying not to look like a tourist myself as Max's machine pumped water for a drought-stricken Senegalese village. The desert had encroached on local farm fields, so food was scarce there too.

I can't fully describe the joy which coursed through that little place as the windmill worked and water flowed. Children danced, women shouted for joy, and men grinned who hadn't smiled in a long time. Because now they could feed their families.

I was so moved, so touched by what I saw, right then and there I said a quiet prayer to God: "You are the master strategist. Nobody can put this together like you. Let me work for you."

It was a moment of divine inspiration I've never forgotten—from that day to this.

***

My visit to Senegal included other stops. In one place that had a water well for three months, crop seedlings sprouted. A second community—six months into its well—had already grown surplus food. While villagers with a year-old water project were fixing up an old school.

What struck me about all this was the multiplier effect clean water had on quality of life, especially when coupled with the Gospel. People just felt empowered.

Back home I couldn't stop thinking how impossible it seemed—and how incredible it was. A Christian aid group. My Pizza King boss. Well drillers, tourists and Mr. Max. All transforming lives on the other side of the world.

The experience changed me too. For I knew—come what may—that I wanted to do this for the rest of my life.

So when friends told me about a little ministry in Houston called Living Water International—there it was, right in the middle of the name—I was intrigued.

These people believed in the power of lifegiving water as a catalyst for both physical and spiritual change. Sharing the love of Jesus by going beyond the well. And so did I.

So in 2008 I took the plunge—yes, that was a deliberate water reference—and became their chief fundraiser. Two years later they asked me to be president and CEO—and I've never looked back.

Now I hope you'll join me—as we strive to look ahead.

WINNER: TRANSPORTATION

"All Systems Go: Safely Launching Commercial Space Transportation to Greater Heights"

By Lisa Zagaroli for Kelvin B. Coleman, Associate Administrator, Commercial Space Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration

Delivered at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, Washington, D.C., Feb. 21, 2024

Thank you, Sirisha. Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the 2024 Commercial Space Transportation Conference!

It's wonderful to be with all of you, here, in person. I've spotted some good friends already, and it's great to see the breadth of the commercial space transportation community represented here today—operators, spaceports, manufacturers, government colleagues, international partners, academia, and more.

The FAA is pleased to co-host this year's event with the Commercial Spaceflight Federation, which along with my team did a lot of the heavy lifting to put this event together. Thanks everyone for your hard work.

We have a terrific agenda prepared that supports our theme of "All Systems Go: Safely Launching Commercial Space Transportation to Greater Heights."

This is the 26th time we've come together at this conference. It's been a place …

to exchange knowledge and insights,

present updates on the latest advancements in our field,

and collaborate as professionals and colleagues.

I have attended every one of these conferences and I know several of you have as well. This one feels more pressing, as we realize all this industry can achieve, and we expand the boundaries of what we are capable of by enabling safe commercial space transportation.

History/Context

We've come a long way together as a community, and we can celebrate a few key milestones this week.

This Saturday—February 24—is the 40th anniversary of the Office of Commercial Space Transportation in the Department of Transportation. It was created by executive order by President Reagan, so it is rather fitting to be in this building today.

In April, COMSTAC will mark 40 years since its charter was developed as our valued advisory committee.

And I brought something with me to the podium that I would like to show you.

It's the first commercial space transportation license application ever received by the Department of Transportation.

Look at this beauty! I know what you're thinking—why isn't this relic on display in the Smithsonian? Maybe someday they'll put this right next to the Moon Rock where it belongs. But for now, anyway, we're taking good care of it at the FAA.

The application is dated 1988. And it's signed by Donald Slayton, who you know as the Mercury Seven astronaut and one-time director [of flight crew operations] at NASA. At the time, Deke was president of Space Services Inc.

After DOT approved the application—and I feel certain that was no small feat—the company launched its three-ton rocket, Starfire One, 35 years ago—on March 29, 1989.

Here's how the New York Times described the event:

"In a foretaste of bigger things to come, the nation's first private rocket big enough to require a Government license roared into space yesterday on a successful suborbital flight lasting about 15 minutes."

As the spaceship reached heights of 198 miles above Earth, the payload, known as Consort One, included experiments that had all of seven minutes to measure …

- how liquids mix in weightlessness,
- how plastic foam forms,
- and how powdered metals bond

under high temperature.

The Times called the launch a "modest debut" that "portends big strides for the fledgling private spacecraft industry."

"Some experts" went as far as predicting the industry "could reap billions of dollars in revenue by the turn of the century."

Well, they were on the right track. Thirty-five years later, the global space economy is now valued at a half-trillion dollars, and just a couple weeks ago, the Space Federation announced that the space economy will be worth over a trillion in the next decade. The United States has contributed roughly half of that substantial commercial activity.

That translates to good jobs, resilient supply chains and healthy competition.

Aspirations/Growth

Space transportation—perhaps more than any other endeavor—is synonymous with the aspirations of America and indeed our world—
reaching for the unknown, defying odds, outdoing everyday dreams.

It offers unprecedented opportunities for scientific discovery and progress in our daily lives. We've already seen how it's contributed to cell phones and communication networks, global navigation, better weather forecasting and national preparedness, agricultural monitoring, understanding the origins of our world, and so much more.

Even more so with artificial intelligence permeating our world and the potential of quantum information science emerging, space holds boundless promise to tackle many of our world's

challenges—solving food shortages, stabilizing the climate, creating new energy sources, improving health and medicine, and advancements only few could imagine just a short while ago.

This is an extraordinary time to be in the commercial space transportation arena, as we experience a surge in technological innovation, broader scope and reach, and incredible growth in launch frequency that can make these things possible.

• Since 1989, the FAA has licensed or permitted more than 700 commercial space transportation operations, more than any other country in the world.

• Just five years ago we averaged one launch per week. Compare that to the pace we experienced in 2023—when we averaged one launch every three days.

• We had 124 total operations in 2023—up nearly 50 percent from the year prior. That's tripled just since 2020.

• In fact, in January, we eclipsed the record for one month with 13 operations [up from 12].

Mission

Amid this growth, the FAA is ever more committed to our responsibilities to …

• protect public health and safety,

• safeguard property,

• and defend the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States.

Beyond our regulatory duties, we are leaning in as a partner to encourage and facilitate private sector operations… because we recognize that enabling safe space transportation is central to ensuring the United States continues to be a global leader in space.

For those who are new to this field and aren't fully aware of the FAA's role beyond licensing and ensuring launches, we're engaged in a host of other activities with agency partners—NASA, the Departments of Defense and Commerce, the Coast Guard, to name a few, and our international collaborators, many of whom are represented in the audience today. These engagements are necessary in countless ways—to protect our security, our natural resources and essential communication networks.

For continued success, no part of our community can stand still while the others race ahead. We must all do our part.

At times, we must be able to count on one another for help, and today you will hear me both offer up help and ask for it in return.

The FAA and my office in particular—AST—have embraced a mindset and methods to become better, smarter, more agile and efficient—always in ways that won't compromise safety.

Safety

Safety is a priority for everyone in this room and there's certainly a lot to be proud of—not a single fatality or serious injury as a result of one of these operations.

Still, this is no time to rest on our record. The best time for vigilance is when we're not trying to recover from a crisis. Healthy partnership can prevent a bad day from ever happening.

The FAA's culture is to learn from every operation, and identify potential risk and reduce it, so that potential hazards and vulnerabilities become smaller and fewer.

We know the consequences can be enormous if we get it wrong—consequences for lives, our atmosphere, our industry, and more.

That's why we don't cut corners. Safety is our North Star and our compass will always point there.

Human Space Flight

This is increasingly important as human space flight becomes commonplace.

Here's yet another milestone for you—we have been licensing crewed missions for 20 years now.

• 150 astronauts and space flight participants have been on board 40 missions since 2004, when Mike Melvill became the first commercial astronaut aboard Scaled Composites' SpaceShipOne to win the Ansari X Prize.

• Of those 150, 48 traveled to space just last year, and 10 more have done so since January.

While we await Congress' direction on the learning period or moratorium, my team recognizes we must be proactive and ready to shape human space flight.

• That's why we published an update to our Recommended Practices for Human Spaceflight.

• And we established a SpARC—an aerospace rulemaking committee—to help us determine the scope and cost of occupant safety regulations, and recommend a safety framework for future regulations. We'll look for recommendations from the SpARC 460 by this summer.

Here's what we'd like to see from industry. You can help by developing voluntary standards through standards bodies and related committees. Quality standards that are reached collaboratively can translate to less time spent developing a means of compliance, and quicker review time by the FAA.

AST Staffing

Now, quicker review time is something we tend to hear a lot about. We know innovative companies want to move swiftly, and they want us to run with them.

One way AST is meeting increased demand for our services is by shoring up our workforce and other resources.

When I joined the FAA in 1996, AST had about 40 employees. Ten years ago, we had 73. Now, thanks in part to a robust recruitment campaign we call Find Your Place in Space, as of this week, we have 143 staff members, and we're aggressively filling vacancies with a goal of growing to 157.

And let me assure you, it's a privilege for me to lead this hard-working, skilled AST team. They are often juggling multiple competing priorities, doing everything they can to ensure your operations are enabled 24/7/365.

Something that operators can do is make sure your licensing applications are in good shape at the outset, with

strong narratives in compliance artifacts that spell out exactly how you comply. And it's important that you minimize the amendments and go-backs. Because when you make a significant change, that often triggers a delay as we have to go back and gauge how it impacts relevant parts of the mission.

When quality inputs come from the applicant, more expeditious approvals are possible, so it's a win-win for all of us.

Part 450

My team knows that to be more efficient, we needed to shift away from mission-by-mission approvals and toward approvals of processes and methods. That's why we fully embraced the overhaul of our launch and reentry regulations about three years ago.

Part 450 replaced prescriptive public safety requirements with performance-based requirements also sought by industry to provide more flexibility, allow more methods of compliance and clear the path for innovation.

We designed part 450 to allow operators to obtain a license for a portfolio of operations.

Now here's what we need from industry—a timely transition to part 450 from legacy licenses by the March 2026 deadline.

If you're having challenges with the transition, please share those issues with us so we can help you resolve them. You don't have to wait for a COMSTAC meeting or a congressional hearing, or another formal opportunity.

My team holds "office hours" every other Friday for anyone who has questions about the Flight Safety Analysis Methodology, and we're accessible in other ways.

New SpARC

We have heard input from some of you already. We understand that part 450 was developed very quickly and we are all learning together as we go along. We have considered some opportunities to smooth out a few wrinkles and enhance it to better meet its objectives.

So today I'm announcing that the FAA will create a part 450 aerospace rulemaking committee, known as a SpARC, that will address some of these opportunities for improvement.

This SpARC is an opportunity for industry leaders to work with us to iron out some areas we have already identified as challenging, things like the approach to reentry vehicles and hybrid vehicles, the need for alternative approaches for applicants who are in the test flight phase of a program, and flight safety analysis methodologies. It will help us further enhance part 450 to reduce the burden on the applicants and licensees as well as the FAA, and enable the FAA to process applications with greater expediency.

We've had a good deal of success with SpARCs, and I'm eagerly awaiting the final committee report from the Financial Responsibility SpARC.

I appreciate the time and efforts of those who are participating in the Financial Responsibility and Human Space Flight SpARCs, and I hope we can continue to count on some of you here today to contribute to the new 450 SpARC.

We are eager to kick off the new part SpARC by fall, maybe even earlier.

LEAP

Now that we've consolidated rules into one performance-based rule with Part 450, and enhanced our staff to better manage increased cadence, we want to utilize modern technology tools to adapt to the surge in applications.

One example of how we are doing that—AST recently awarded a contract for a new License Electronic Application Portal called LEAP.

• This portal will streamline the licensing process for new applicants and provide more transparency into the process.

• LEAP will guide applicants in a step-by-step process, and case management will allow for two-way communication.

• We expect to have an initial viable tool by this fall.

LEAP is necessary in part because our team spends too much time fishing for specific data points as they sort through applications that are thousands of pages in length.

Applications definitely don't look like this anymore. (hold up Starfire One application again) No two are alike. I'd call them unique masterpieces, but I wouldn't want to get carried away.

We are looking forward to more streamlined documents that are easier to navigate, especially as we deal with more incoming requests.

In-space Authorization

Another way commercial activities are growing is through the work you are planning on doing in-space—such as on-orbit servicing, orbital debris removal and space-based manufacturing.

We have been working hard with the National Space Council on the best way to address novel space activities that aren't directly regulated under the current U.S. regulatory system.

We know there are a number of other options that have been discussed, but we are completely supportive of the Administration's framework as are Commerce, NASA, DoD and other stakeholders.

• You as operators would only have to apply for one license to conduct all transportation activities including launch, in-space transportation and reentry.

• The Department of Transportation would handle all human spaceflight activities in addition to launch and re-entry, and flights with the sole purpose of in-space transportation of cargo or goods.

• AST's current launch and reentry responsibilities and the authorities sought by the legislative proposal carry different risk profiles that won't require the same level of resources. So, we expect to be able to use a light touch.

• The Department of Commerce would regulate activities like uncrewed in-space assembly and manufacturing.

This option provides clarity, flexibility and predictability.

This is something I hope we can count on you to voice your support about in forums where your influence will make a difference. We are ready for this plan to move forward because it will help industry and help enable safe space transportation.

Spaceports

Now let me say something about spaceports. We're up to 14 licensed spaceports and they're going to play an increasing role in launch missions, as well as hosting training, manufacturing and other activities.

Two years ago, at this conference, we announced the formation of the National Spaceport Interagency Working Group. I'm pleased to announce the group just completed a comprehensive set of recommendations that will be released very soon. These recommendations promote innovation and investment in spaceport infrastructure, … and facilitate cooperation and partnerships among spaceports both domestically and internationally. They also set out to establish consistency in operations and standards at U.S. federal and commercial spaceports.

I hope that some of you will have an opportunity to attend our International Spaceport Forum this fall. We plan to host it right before the International Astronautical Congress in Milan on October 13.

It will be a chance for spaceport directors and regulators from all over the world to come together and discuss challenging topics that face the space transportation industry as it goes global.

Summary

I mentioned earlier that to reach greater heights, no part of our community can stand still while others race ahead.

I hope you can see that while the FAA will always dig in on safety, we aren't digging in on doing business in the same ways we have in the past.

Today I have outlined just a few initiatives that FAA and AST have underway that will both make our work more seamless and help you execute your missions.

As the government leader in commercial space transportation, we've invested—in our team, in automation, in processes, in our regulatory framework, and by tapping into the knowledge and experience of other leaders in the field [through SpARCs and other forums].

Continuous growth and improvement are needed as we rethink, reimagine and revolutionize the possibilities for our aerospace system.

As the global leaders in space, we must model how space activities should be conducted—responsibly, peacefully and sustainably.... to inspire the next generation of students, researchers, engineers and explorers—the people who will expand boundaries and lead us into the exciting unknown.

WINNER: CONTROVERSIAL OR HIGHLY POLITICIZED TOPICS

"Muriel McKay—Time Is Running Out"

By Benjamin Timpson for
Mark Dyer, Grandson of Muriel McKay

//

Delivered at
Our Society, London, Nov. 5, 2024

Good evening.

My name is Mark Dyer …

… and fifty four years ago …

… my grandmother was kidnapped.

We have been trying to find her ever since.

The facts of what happened back then are well known …

… and as a society intrigued by crime …

… you will know them better than most.

This is the third time your members have discussed the kidnap.

More than any other case.

Not a record my grandmother ever wished to hold.

1971.

2019.

And now we are here again this evening.

But tonight is different.

This is massive.

In this room …

… we have assembled more people who have lived and breathed this case …

… than ever before.

Family who have flown in especially from Australia.

Top journalists who made their career covering the kidnapping and search.

And a lawyer who has taken us closer to the truth than perhaps anyone else.

We are all here give you everything.

Which begs a very simple question:

Why?

Well …

… because in January of this year …

… I did something I never imagined I would.

I sat down face to face with the last surviving kidnapper.

At the time of the kidnapping he was known as M3.

M1 passed away in 2009.

M2 in 2021.

M3 was alive …

… and he wanted to talk.

And we wanted to listen.

Alongside my mother Diane (GESTURE) …

… lawyer Matthew Gale (GESTURE) …

… Martin Brunt from Sky News (GESTURE) …

… and representatives of the Times newspaper …

… we all made our way over to his home in Trinidad for a weekend meeting.

Now …

… to almost everyone else in the world …

… my grandmothers murder and kidnap is a historical artifact.

But I have to tell you …

… as we made that flight …

… I felt as if it were yesterday.

The same emotions I felt as a boy of 6.

The confusion.

The fear.

And unfortunately even the shame.

I remember very well the parents at my boarding school …

… telling the other children to stay away from me …

… concerned that I would somehow get them kidnapped …

… or tarnish them with bad luck too.

Most kids grow up afraid of a monster under the bed.

My monster was very real.

A mafia organisation called M3.

Who had made my family and my grandmother one of the most famous women in the country.

And now …

… I was on the way to meet that monster.

But we had a job to do.

So I resolved that whoever I met …

… I would project utter confidence and friendliness.

With the result that if you watch the footage of the meeting …

… I greet him like gameshow host!

But I needn't have put on that front.

Because what happened next was astonishing.

This kidnapper …

… my nemesis.

In reality …

… it was like meeting some old boy you'd known for years.

No stress.

No animosity.

He was just a broken man looking for some kind of acceptance.

A human connection …

… an audience for his shame and regret.

He said he had been waiting to meet a member of the family ever since his imprisonment.

In fact two minutes after we shook hands …

… I made a special announcement that I had someone for him to meet.

Diane my mother.

His face lit up like it was Christmas.

I can only describe it as is sheer joy.

They both went to greet each other.

She even managed to hug him.

54 years of emotional walls were down.

It was only when I looked over at Martin Brunt …

… the hardened crime journalist …

… and saw that his face had gone a shade of grey …

… that I was reminded we were sat with a convicted kidnapper.

In the end we spent two days together.

And I can tell you we did not flinch.

We went through every moment of the kidnap and death …

… every movement …

… listened to taped phones call he made.

Which returns me to the question of why?

Why go through all of that?

Why have we all come here again tonight?

Because during those two days …

… we got what our family have been desperately searching for.

M3 …

… Nizamodeen Hosein …

… agreed to end half a century of pain …

… and show us conclusively where he buried my grandmother.

No more mystery.

No more searching.

An end to the torment.

I offered him $50,000 to point out the exact spot he buried her.

$25,000 just for the attempt.

Another $25,000 if we found her remains.

He had his own lawyer prepare and ratify the agreement.

He is absolutely destitute …

… completely broke.

If he didn't know where my grandmother was …

… there was every chance he could have simply taken the $25,000 and given us nothing.

But when offered the first payment …

… he wouldn't take any money.

He said he didn't think he had long left …

… and would do it to just to clear his conscience.

As a member of the Muslim faith …

… he believes that in your latter days …

… it is possible to appeal to your God for forgiveness.

His reasoning sat comfortably with us as a family.

Turning down that sum of money …

… convinced me he was absolutely genuine.

Now that should have been the end of things.

I should be stood in front of you now …

… explaining how he did just that.

How we laid her to rest.

How generational trauma has begun to heal.

How the British public were told the truth.

How my mother found peace.

But I'm not.

As it stands …

… the police will not let it happen.

And I'm here because we need your help to change that.

We are running out of time.

He must be allowed to come to the UK and direct another search.

Nizamodeen Hosein is a lucid …

… reliable witness.

He alone knows the truth and he wants to help.

But he is also getting older.

Unless we act now …

… right now …

… we risk losing him—and by extension my grandmother—forever.

Now …

… if you are listening to this …

… and wondering 'am I missing something here?'

Rest assured …

… you are not.

The situation is as bonkers as it sounds.

The Metropolitan Police website has an explanation of why they are blocking it:

'We know questions have been raised …

… about why we have not brought Hosein to the UK to assist with the search.

Our view has ALWAYS been that we do not believe it would provide us with beneficial information …

… and therefore we would not formally approach the Home Office …

… who would be required to grant permission'

Ladies and Gentlemen …

… I am no Sherlock Holmes.

But I would suggest that the man who admits he kidnapped her might …

… just might …

… have some 'beneficial' information about where she is.

Taken alone …

… you could forgive their decision not to allow Hosein to come here as an oversight.

A bureaucratic mistake which common sense would in time—correct.

But this is not an exception.

In fact it's just the latest …

… and most desperate …

… in a long pattern of what for now …

… I'll charitably call 'errors' made by the police in the search for my grandmother.

To understand …

… it's helpful to go back to the beginning.

My grandmother was kidnapped in December 1969.

But in fact Nizamodeen …

… his brother Arthur …

… and Adam (never charged—had an alibi) …

… were targeting Rupert Murdoch's wife Anna.

They watched Rupert interviewed on the David Frost show …

… and saw an opportunity to extort a lot of money …

… from a man with a lot of money.

My grandfather Alec worked closely with Rupert …

… having just taken over the Sun newspaper.

The kidnappers mistake stemmed from the fact that at Christmas 69 …

… the Murdochs went back to Australia …

… and allowed Alec to borrow the company car.

The kidnappers tracked this Rolls Royce to my grandmothers house …

… which in turn …

… had a large flagpole outside with the Australian flag.

They thought naturally they had found their target.

Around a week later …

… they made their move.

After a trip to the dentist …

… and dropping her housekeeper home …

… my grandmother entered the driveway …

… and the Hosein brothers followed her in.

They robbed the house …

… and then told my grandmother to get in their car.

She probably went willingly …

… because it made sense burglars would simply dump her by the side of the road …

… away from the telephone.

Instead they held her captive …

… and began demanding money to release her.

One million pounds. Fourteen million today.

It's a crime which sounds self-explanatory now:

Kidnap for ransom.

But this was the first time this had ever happened in 450 years of UK criminal history.

My family tried to hand over the money …

… but each attempt was either bungled by the police …

… or thwarted by bad luck.

The only positive thing those attempts did …

… was allow the police to track a suspicious car to Rook Farm …

… a property owned by Arthur Hossein.

On the 7th February 1970 the police raided it.

There they found notebooks with tear patterns …

… matching notes my grandmother had been forced to write in captivity.

But she was nowhere to be found.

Which leaves two possible outcomes.

Either she was buried at the farm after her death …

… as Nizamodeen Hosein now admits.

Or these amateur criminals …

… somehow improvised a flawless method of moving and disposing of her body.

At the time the brothers denied any knowledge of her whereabouts.

They hoped that with no body …

… there could be no murder charge.

But then as now …

… every logical argument points to the farm.

And so the pattern of 'errors' began.

The police made their effort at searching in February 1970.

I don't know exactly how and where they dug …

… because they don't have the records any more.

All I know is they used sticks and dogs.

No shovels.

Frozen ground was given as an excuse for calling it off.

Nothing was found.

That was the first and last attempt on the farm for 52 years.

All through the 70's the police pushed to dig in other locations.

Mostly on the strength of what we believed were windups from the public.

And this was even more bizarre …

… because there was a senior figure in the police who was in no doubt.

In 1973 Bill Smith …

… the investigator who arrested the brothers …

… appeared in a BBC documentary called Worse Than Murder.

In it …

… he went on record as saying he was absolutely certain she was at the farm.

Interestingly …

… the journalist who made 'Worse Than Murder …

… spoke to your society in 2019.

We were cut adrift and decades went past.

The police had no interest …

… but like all of you …

… the public remained compelled by the unanswered questions.

Other parts of the world are pretty sanguine about people disappearing.

Thank God this country isn't.

Three years ago …

… there was another documentary about the murder …

… 'The Wimbledon Kidnapping'.

We were shocked to learn that the makers of the documentary …

… had tracked down Nizamodeen.

He was still denying everything.

But he was alive …

… and he was talking.

I knew this was our last chance.

Matthew went to speak to him in Trinidad.

And slowly …

… with enormous patience …

… he began to reveal the truth.

He had lived in fear of his older brothers Arthur and Adam …

… domineering figures all his life.

His loyalty to them was unbelievable.

While Arthur had died decades earlier …

… Adam lived near Nizamodeen in Trinidad until his death in 2021 …

… and kept a psychological hold over him.

Now Adam was dead …

… Nizamodeen realised there was nothing holding him back from confessing.

It was the key that unlocked the safe.

In November 21 …

… I got woken up by a phonecall in the middle of the night.

Nizamodeen was confessing EVERYTHING to Matthew.

He admitted my grandmother had died of a heart attack as they held her.

He admitted they buried her at the farm.

Quite honestly he was shocked they hadn't found her.

Every day in jail he imagined he would be confronted saying:

'They found her'

We took an extraordinary body of new evidence to the MET police in Dec 21 …

… and left them with no option but to act.

We asked them to meet him on an online video call with us.

Or just speak on the phone.

They refused …

… saying it was ''pointless''.

In April 22 …

… the first dig went ahead …

… with no request for co-operation from Nizamodeen …

… and refusal for any members of my family to be present.

No warrant was obtained …

… and a 'friendly' …

… limited dig …

… was agreed with the landowner.

Then on the last day of that dig …

… I was called by Susan …

… one of the police officers.

Out of the blue she admitted 'we really need your help'.

Finally …

… after having told us they wanted nothing to do with him …

… they requested a video call with Nissam.

I immediately set it up …

… on one proviso.

On the call they needed to pretend not to be policemen.

They could be gardeners …

… geologists …

… anything but!

Just not police!

Because when he was arrested …

… Nizamodeen was beaten …

… tortured …

… and starved.

He wanted to help …

… but he was terrified of the police.

The call started well …

… UNTIL the senior investigating officer decided he would announce who he really was.

Nissam started shaking …

… and then collapsed on the floor.

An ambulance was called.

Matthew remembers it well.

We would get nothing more from him.

You can only imagine my frustration and anger …

… when shortly after dig Number 1 …

… Nizamodeen confirmed they had been digging in the wrong place.

Not only that …

… but they never even finished the planned dig …

… despite it being signed off as complete.

I wanted an explanation.

There was none.

A wall of silence.

Yet again …

… the police wanted nothing more to do with us.

They told my wife in the meeting …

… that she should explain to me …

… that I was wasting my time.

Which led up to that meeting in January this year in Trinidad.

We made sure that footage of that meeting was very public.

Hence inviting Martin of Sky News…

… the documentary team from Wimbledon kidnap …

… Ben Ellory of the Times along.

With everything recorded …

… there could be no doubt of his sincerity or competence.

This forced the police to act on it.

But in response …

…rather than lobby for Nizamodeen to simply fly over and point it out …

… the police decided once again to prevaricate.

They would question him themselves.

The MET put him in a Trinidad police station for three days and interrogated him.

And as my mother sums it up …

… they snuffed it.

Three years of painstaking work gaining his trust …

… gone.

An elderly …

… destitute man who spent decades in jail in denial and fear.

Who had just made the first tentative steps towards atoning.

Suddenly surrounded by foreign police making demands.

Their conclusion was that he was unreliable!

And so rather than approach a new dig with Nizamodeen stood directing them …

… it was led on the strength of what they could wring out of him in that three-day interrogation.

Confused and scared …

… looking at a map of a place he hadn't seen in 50 years …

… wanting nothing more than to get out of there.

Having destroyed the chances of using the best witness …

… they then introduced yet more cruel preconditions.

My mother was banned from attending the dig.

For what possible reason?

We were told the new search could last up to ten days.

For reasons they won't disclose …

… they called it off after seven.

At the final hurdle …

… after everything we have been through …

… they botched the dig again.

The wall of silence went back up.

We have had to instigate legal proceedings to even have them tell us why they aborted the dig.

If this was simply a question of money …

… this would be all over.

My family has spent an astonishing amount doing the police's job for them.

We have even gone as far as offering to buy the farm outright …

… and bring in a specialist team ourselves.

But to no avail.

Now …

… as the speakers you will hear tonight will demonstrate …

… this should not …

… and cannot be the end.

The campaign to allow Nizamodeen to come to the UK and help direct a final dig …

… should matter to everyone in this room.

It should matter because of the needless emotional damage that has been allowed to happen.

That continues to happen.

If it was your mother who had gone through this …

… you would not accept the injustice or the incompetence.

You would fight tooth and nail to do something about it …

… and not stop until you laid the body to rest.

It should matter because in this country …

… the truth matters.

What does it say about us …

… if we wilfully allow a crime this horrific to go unresolved?

If we say it's simply too difficult?

The juice isn't worth the squeeze?

And finally it should matter above all …

… because we can do this.

We have the solution.

There can be a happy ending to this if only we use it.

Nizamodeen doesn't want money.

He just wants to be allowed to solve this while he still can.

Before I introduce our speakers this evening …

… one final point.

I imagine that for most presentations to your members …

… Chatham House rules are fully in place.

Not this evening.

We want you to talk about this.

Quote us.

Shout about it.

If the last few years have taught me anything …

… it's that nothing happens unless you do.

It doesn't matter how many times we have done this over the last few years …

… it's never easy.

But after coming so far …

… and how close we are to the truth …

… we feel we owe it to everyone to see this through.

Not least my mother.

And not least my grandmother.

It's been a very long journey.

In fact this evening …

… it's been 20,000 days since we believe my grandmother died.

It's cost one woman her life …

… and gone on to ruin many …

… many more.

I include the kidnappers in that.

Yet were here today at an extraordinary crossroads.

After all the pain …

… all the suffering …

… we have come together with Nizamodeen and buried the hate.

We have humanised each other.

But unless we take this final step …

… this will never end.

All this humanity …

… forgiveness …

… courage.

The stars aligning to provide one final chance to live out our lives …

… with some measure of peace.

The answer to all that from the police right now …

… is it's simply too hard.

Not in anyone's best interest.

Move on.

And we won't be taking questions.

Well I'm sorry …

… but that's not good enough.

I want answers:

I want to know why the MET have tried to stop this at every stage.

I want to know why none of them will speak publicly about the obscene mistakes they have made.

And I'd like to hear from anyone with a story to match this.

Genuinely.

There are 75 million people in this country.

Is there anyone who had a family member murdered.

And when killer comes out of prison …

… and offers quietly and without payment to show where the body is …

… the police say no.

We're not interested.

We forbid you to even try.

I could spend the rest of this evening telling you the real reasons I believe the police have acted in this way.

But quite frankly …

… it's irrelevant to me. IF we find my grandmother.

This can have a happy ending.

Tomorrow morning Ian …

… Martin and Matthew are flying out to Trinidad tomorrow to see Nizzam.

He has been saying loud and clear:

'I will show you'.

So I urge all of you …

… to do whatever you can to put pressure on the MET to think again.

They will do nothing unless there is a public outcry.

Watch the footage of Nizamodeen and judge for yourself.

Talk about it.

Write about it.

Ask questions.

Put the spotlight on this insane situation and hold them accountable.

Because right now …

… only you have the power to finally solve this mystery.

It will be you who push them into action.

This was the UK's first kidnap for ransom in 450 years.

The first time someone has ever been sent to prison for life with no body.

Let this be the first time we bring a kidnapper back to the UK to end this dreadful situation.

Thank you

WINNER: DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

"From Oil Rigs to Yellow Dresses—the Importance of Believing in Yourself and Helping Others"

By Paul Saville for Ann Davies, Senior Vice President, Wells, bp

//

Delivered at the Society of Petroleum Engineers Women in Engineering event, South Bank University, London, June 20, 2024

Hello everyone.

Thank you, Alice-Joy, for your kind introduction.

And to everyone for turning out this morning.

And thank you to the Society of Petroleum Engineers for the opportunity to be here.

It's great to be part of the Women in Energy seminar.

I love all the work you do promoting and supporting women in our sector.

Women have a vital role to play.

And for bp's part, we are working alongside you, and making good progress.

Half of our executive leadership team are women.

More than half of our board are female, too.

And by next year, we aim to have equal numbers of men and women in our top-120 leadership roles as well.

We know, just as you know, that having diverse teams is not only right…

They perform better, too.

When I joined bp 19 years ago, our industry wasn't as diverse.

And this leads me to what I want to talk about today.

How self-belief and helping each other bring about change.

I can think of three moments when I really learnt these lessons—and I want to share those with you today.

Three moments—relating to oil rigs, yellow dresses and life before bp.

The first moment relates to my early career, when I worked on oil rigs.

As an engineer, working offshore was a fantastic experience.

Seeing what you design on paper come to life…

Managing safety…

Running operations every day, it was incredible.

I wouldn't be standing here today if I hadn't worked offshore.

But, it wasn't without challenges.

Offshore, there were very few women, as you'd expect of the time.

But I didn't pay much attention to it. I focused on my job.

And I would adapt to the environment around me.

It was, at times, 'macho.'

But, believe it or not, I played rugby for four years at university, so I was used to that kind of environment.

Even so, there were times when I put up with behaviour that I now see was inappropriate.

Behaviour that I laughed off at the time.

For example…

It was not unusual for men to take women's clothing.

And for there to be inappropriate images on the walls.

I wouldn't tolerate that sort of thing now.

But back then, I didn't want to cause a fuss.

Didn't want to stand out.

I wanted to fit in.

And it worked, to a degree.

I got by.

Did my job.

Moved on.

But sometime later in my career, I received a phone call from a woman working offshore.

She was dealing with challenges like those I had experienced offshore.

And wanted my advice on how to deal with them.

That was the moment that made me think differently.

I realised that just ignoring the behaviour was not the right thing to do.

And that other women shouldn't have to go through what I went through.

I, like other women in our industry, want to be known for being engineers… not 'female' engineers.

So, the day I received that phone call changed me.

I joined the Women's Network within bp.

The network has set many standards since it was established. And behaviour towards women offshore has transformed.

We raised the bar to what is acceptable.

The number of women working offshore has increased, so this, too, has helped.

And at bp, we now have a 'speak-up' culture.

We encourage people to speak up when something doesn't feel right.

Speak up means people being free to say:

"I have concerns about this safety procedure."

"I don't understand what I am being asked to do."

"I have an idea of how to do something better."

"I'm not comfortable with my colleague's behaviour."

Wherever you work… or choose to work… make sure they have a speak-up culture.

Speak up when something doesn't feel right.

Speak up for yourself.

Speak up for others.

That's the first lesson I learned.

That leads me to my second moment I want to share.

It's a story about a yellow dress.

This dress that i am wearing.

I dug it out of the back of my wardrobe to illustrate my story today.

Around 12 years ago, I was wearing this dress in an office environment and somebody remarked to me that it wasn't very corporate.

I responded: "Well, maybe this is the new generation of corporate."

But the comment got to me, because I stopped wearing the dress to work.

I didn't want to draw attention to myself.

The judgement influenced my decisions.

About a year later, I did wear this dress again, to an engineering event.

And one of the speakers at the event came up to me after they had presented.

And they started commenting on my dress… and I thought: "Here we go again."

But they surprised me.

They said that when they were on stage, they looked out at the audience and all they could see was a sea of grey and this spot of yellow.

It was a key moment.

It was at that point that I realised that being the spot of yellow in a sea of grey was not a bad thing.

It was something I was comfortable being.

I just needed that nudge—that self-belief.

And when each of us brings our whole self to work, it contributes to the whole of the business.

We work better when we can be ourselves, bring our own ideas and perspectives.

Whether you want to be a spot of yellow or a sea of grey, it doesn't matter.

What matters is that diverse teams perform better.

And, by the way, in our offices today, you can dress head to toe in yellow…

Or purple…

Or green…

Or a mixture of all three… whatever.

Nobody would bat an eyelid.

But wherever you find yourself in your career…

Make sure you feel free and able to bring your whole self to work.

You have a lot to offer.

You need to be yourself.

So, believe in yourself.

As I learnt to.

My final story relates to something that happened before my career.

I'm stood in this fantastic lecture theatre today.

But the idea of going to university was not on my radar when I was growing up.

I grew up in a village in North Wales.

It was picturesque.

But with few prospects for people who lived there.

Girls left school, got married young, had kids, struggled for money.

That was how it tended to go.

I saw it play out time and time again.

I wanted to break that cycle.

I used to gaze out at the stars and dream about flying rockets for NASA instead.

I'd write letters to them. And, to their credit, they'd write back… answering my questions about their space shuttles.

I was around 12 years old at this point.

And what became clear to me was that if I wanted to work for NASA, I'd have to get educated.

And I would need to pay high fees to go to university.

I heard Oxford was pretty good, so I aimed for there.

Academically, I was doing well, but money was a barrier.

I knew my parents could never afford to send me to university.

So, I pretended to be older than I was to get a job. I worked hard, studied hard, and saved my money.

At 17, I was offered an interview to study physics at the University of Oxford.

I had no idea what to expect and no way to get to the interview.

My family didn't have a car.

So, I had to take a lift from somebody I barely knew. A friend of a friend of a friend.

When I arrived for my interview at Oxford, they asked me to take loads of tests.

The whole thing took longer than I expected.

And I missed my lift home.

After my interviews, I went to the train station.

But the money I had wasn't enough to buy a ticket home.

I had nowhere to stay.

I was stranded.

I was scared.

And I didn't want to go back to the university to explain the situation as I

was worried it would reflect negatively on me.

That it might wreck my chance of getting on their course.

That was my mindset back then.

So, I asked a woman who worked at the train station for help.

She looked like the kind of person who would be a good mum, so I thought I could trust her.

I was right, as when I explained my situation, she sprang into action.

She went back into the ticket office and a little while later, came over to me with a wad of orange train tickets.

She had worked out a series of journeys I could take with the money I had that would eventually get me back to North Wales.

She went to great lengths for me that day.

I told her that I'd never forget her act of kindness.

And I haven't.

The fact I am talking about her today is proof of that.

When I got accepted into the University of Oxford, I went to see her to tell her the news, and she cried tears of happiness.

University changed my life.

But I didn't join NASA, as you may have guessed.

I joined bp instead… and I'm glad that I did.

Like NASA, bp offers infinite possibilities.

Having access to energy is a human right.

So, I'm proud to work for bp.

And I worked bloody hard to get to where I am.

But I had help from others, too.

Like the kind lady at Oxford train station.

And like the women's network did for women working offshore.

When we help each other, we can achieve more.

The key thing for me was knowing when to ask for help.

And this, in turn, has shown me when I can help others.

That's the third thing I've learnt.

And right now, we need to help each other more than ever.

The energy sector is one of the few where you can say you're helping to play a part in solving one of the world's greatest challenges.

How to provide energy to everyone on the planet.

Remember, there are still nearly a billion people today without access to electricity.

It's a privilege to work in our sector.

But the reality is that the energy system is more complex than ever.

The world wants and needs energy that is secure, affordable and sustainable.

Achieving this energy trilemma will require a diversity of solutions.

These include oil, gas and renewables—all sectors I've worked in.

And it requires a diversity of thought.

Different backgrounds, skills and experience.

It needs good men…

And it needs good women.

Men and women who feel empowered to speak up.

Men and women who believe in themselves.

Who feel able to bring their whole selves to work.

Men and women who look out for and help each other.

Men and women who are free to be a spot of yellow…

And feel inspired and empowered in what they do.

As I now do—and I hope you do, too.

Thank you.

WINNER: ECONOMICS

"There and Back Again"

By Judy DeHaven for John C. Williams,
President and CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of New York

//

Delivered at the Cradle of Aviation Museum,
Garden City, New York, Feb. 28, 2024

Introduction

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for having me here today. I always enjoy meeting with business and community leaders in the Federal Reserve's Second District. And it's a real treat to join you here at the Cradle of Aviation Museum. It's a great reminder of Long Island's rich history in aeronautics and innovation.

If only I had time to visit some of the space exhibits today. Alas, maybe next time....

Instead, in my remarks, I will focus on how the Federal Reserve is working to achieve our goals of maximum employment and price stability. I'll also discuss the significant progress we've seen in restoring balance to the economy and bringing inflation down to the Federal Open Market Committee's (FOMC's) 2 percent longer-run goal. And I'll talk about what we still need to see for a full and sustained return to price stability. Finally, I'll give my economic outlook.

Before I get into all of that, I need to provide the standard Fed disclaimer that the views I express today are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the FOMC or others in the Federal Reserve System.

Falling Inflation, Low Unemployment

In thinking about the state of our economy today, and what that means for the future, it's important to start from where we've been.

As business leaders, you know all too well the impacts of the pandemic. In many ways, Long Island's economy mirrors New York City's. Both were hit especially hard in 2020—in fact, much harder than what we saw nationally. And in 2023, both reached an important milestone, returning to the number of jobs we had before the pandemic.

Last year was also a turning point for the U.S. economy. Global supply chains, which were severely disrupted during the pandemic and early in the recovery, returned to normal. Demand came into better balance with supply. And the economy grew far faster than anyone expected a year ago, boosted by increases in the labor force and productivity.

At the same time, the labor market remained strong, with the unemployment rate under 4 percent—a mark it's held for the past two years, the longest stretch in five decades. And inflation—as measured by the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index—continued to decline from its 40-year high of about 7 percent in mid-2022, reaching about 2-1/2 percent last year.

Given that we are in a museum that houses an actual Lunar Module—and all eyes are on plans to return to the moon—I cannot resist the temptation to use the mission to send astronauts to the moon as a metaphor for the economy.

Like traveling to the moon and back, inflation shot up, then came back down. And as with the Apollo missions, it's the safe return home that's essential. While we've seen great progress toward achieving our goals, the journey is not yet over, and I am very focused on making sure we complete this mission successfully.

A Strong, More Balanced Labor Market

I'm going to spend some time digging deeper into the trends behind both sides of our dual mandate goals. I'll start with employment.

As you'll recall, when the economy recovered from the pandemic, the labor market turned red hot. Demand for workers far exceeded supply, and that imbalance contributed to rapid wage growth and high inflation.

Now, the labor market—both in the nation as a whole and here in the Second District—has shown signs of returning to something closer to normal. Nationally, many indicators—such as quits rates and surveys of perceptions of availability of workers and jobs—have returned to around pre-pandemic levels.

Throughout this process of getting into better balance, the labor market has remained strong. The current unemployment rate of 3.7 percent is near my estimate for the unemployment rate that is likely to prevail over the longer run. And job growth continues to be solid.

Despite the very real progress in restoring balance, two important indicators point to lingering tightness in the labor market: job openings and wage growth. Job vacancies, which reached all-time highs in the red-hot labor market of 2022, have trended lower since then, but are still quite elevated relative to pre-pandemic norms. And while we have seen measures of wage growth come down from their pandemic-era peaks, they remain above pre-Covid averages.

The Return Trip of Inflation

That leads me to the other side of our mandate, price stability. As I mentioned, inflation has declined significantly over the past year and a half. This drop has been broad-based, encompassing decreases in inflation rates for food, energy, goods, and

services. The decline in inflation has benefited from a reduction in demand and supply imbalances, both here and internationally, and the resolution of global supply-chain bottlenecks.

One way to illustrate the dynamics of inflation is through the New York Fed's measure of underlying inflation, called the Multivariate Core Trend inflation (MCT). Before the pandemic, this measure was 1.8 percent, slightly below the FOMC's 2 percent inflation target. As inflation rose following the pandemic and the onset of Russia's war on Ukraine, it climbed sharply, peaking at about 5-1/2 percent in June of 2022.

Since then, the MCT has fallen significantly, reaching 2.3 percent in December, reflecting declines in all the major categories of core inflation. Like the flight path the Apollo missions took to the moon and back, the MCT's return trajectory is a mirror image of its rise. But, we still have a ways to go on the journey to sustained 2 percent inflation.

You see a similar round trip in measures of near- and medium-term inflation expectations. According to the New York Fed's monthly Survey of Consumer Expectations, one- and three-year-ahead inflation expectations rose as inflation surged. Since then, these measures have come back to Earth.

One-year-ahead expectations are within the range seen in the years prior to the pandemic, and three-year-ahead expectations are now actually a bit below their 2014-2019 average. Other measures of inflation expectations show similar round-trip trajectories.

Monetary Policy and the Economic Outlook

In summary, the economy is strong, imbalances are diminishing, and inflation has come down but remains above our 2 percent longer-run target.

What does that mean for monetary policy?

Over the past two years, the FOMC has put in place a restrictive stance of monetary policy with the aim of bringing inflation back to 2 percent on a sustained basis. Given the progress we have seen, the risks to achieving our maximum employment and price stability goals are moving into better balance.

At its January meeting, the FOMC kept the target range for the federal funds rate unchanged at 5-1/4 to 5-1/2 percent. In announcing that decision, the Committee said it "does not expect it will be appropriate to reduce the target range until it has gained greater confidence that inflation is moving sustainably toward 2 percent."

Taking into account the effects of restrictive monetary policy, I expect GDP growth to slow to about 1-1/2 percent this year, and the unemployment rate to rise modestly, peaking at around 4 percent.

I expect inflation to continue its return journey to 2 percent, although there will likely be bumps along the way, as we saw in the most recent Consumer Price Index data. To be specific, I expect PCE inflation to be around 2 to 2-1/4 percent this year and 2 percent next year.

The risks to this forecast are two-sided. Inflation may surprise on the upside, or consumer strength—a major driver of the robust growth we saw in 2023—may fade more quickly than I anticipate.

Conclusion

Price stability is the bedrock upon which our economic prosperity stands. While the economy has come a long way toward achieving better balance and reaching our 2 percent inflation goal, we are not there yet. I am committed to fully restoring price stability in the context of a strong economy and labor market.

As we navigate the remainder of this journey, I will be focused on the data, the economic outlook, and the risks, in evaluating the appropriate path for monetary policy that best achieves our goals.

Or, to paraphrase the words of the astronaut Alan Shepard, we'll assess incoming data until it's clear all systems are go.

WINNER: ENVIRONMENT/ENERGY/SUSTAINABILITY

"When They Say You Can't, Go Do It"

By Paul Saville for Amber Russell,
Senior Vice President, Refining, bp

//

Delivered at the Women's Global Leadership Conference in Energy, Houston, Nov. 19, 2024

Thank you so much, Kim [Coomber-Hallum].

And hello, Houston!

How are you doing?

It is always great to be back in town after having lived here for 10 years.

I was just here a month or so ago.

I watched the Texans beat the Jags, and caught up with friends over chips and salsa at Pappasito's.

It felt like a perfect Houston weekend.

This city is, quite simply, the home of the energy industry.

And it's an industry that is making progress.

In bp, for instance, I'm proud to say that half our executive leaders and board members are women.

Nearly half of my leadership team are women.

And we're making progress at all levels of the company, too.

But I also know from experience that, as women, we face choices, changes and challenges that can have a bearing on our careers.

Some of our own choice, sure.

But others, not.

And my main message today is that regardless of what life throws at you, or what people may say...

Do not allow it to stop you from reaching your potential.

It reminds me of a poem, by an American poet, Edgar A. Guest, called 'It couldn't be done'.

Some of you may have heard it before.

The poem has always resonated with me, because it feels relevant to my life.

In it, Guest writes how people will always tell you that you cannot do things.

When, in reality, you can.

Many times in my career, I was told certain things could not be done.

But I learned I was wrong to believe such a thing.

Even for a second.

And that it—whatever 'it' was at the time—can be done.

Just like the poem says.

So, to bring this to life, I would like to share with you my experiences of growing up.

How that translated into my early career—and…

Three lessons I learned, which hopefully you will find useful.

So, let's begin by going back.

Because, for me, this idea that 'it couldn't be done' stems from my childhood.

I was born in Centerville, Illinois, then grew up on a farm in Northeast Arkansas.

As some of you might know—or can imagine—life on a farm is tough, unpredictable.

You can work hard and things still go wrong.

However hard we tried, and my goodness we did, this always seemed to be the case.

That it just couldn't be done.

As a consequence, my family struggled financially.

Forget having nice shampoo or conditioner.

We couldn't even afford soda.

That's what enticed me to seek a 'good' job at a young age.

To treat myself to some of the luxuries that we just could not afford.

And I remember thinking that…

When I grow up, I want to find a job that will bring me greater security.

So I can buy shampoo and conditioner that smells nice, and so I can get a Diet Coke.

Fortunately, I was good at math and science.

And was not afraid of a challenge.

And having grown up around big farm machinery…

Working in a low-margin, tough farming business…

And getting your hands dirty...

I was drawn to chemical engineering.

I believed it would offer me the chance for a better future.

So, I studied at the University of Arkansas.

It was there that a professor spoke about the opportunities in the oil and gas industry.

That you were only constrained by your own abilities.

So, I tested that.

And in 1996, I took my first steps into our industry as a process engineer.

Little did I know that my early lessons in perseverance and resilience were building blocks for the future.

I started at Exxon, and I was based just outside Houston in Baytown.

It got off to an interesting start.

On my first day at the refinery, I stepped into the elevator and was mistaken for everyone but a process engineer.

On my way to the eighth floor, every person, male and female, said: "Whose assistant are you?"

I was speechless, I didn't know what to say.

People had these expectations about me in less than a 30-second elevator ride.

Also back then, women in our industry were expected to wear a dress or skirt if they went into the corporate office.

I didn't own a dress—I did grow up on a farm...

I owned pants!

I was told, wearing pants just couldn't be done.

I should go buy a dress.

I graciously declined.

Seems crazy now, but it's true.

You see, people had perceptions about women in the industry.

And what they should and should not wear.

And it went further.

In the early years of my career, people would comment about how I was being perceived.

And by people, I mean senior leaders—who should have had more perspective.

Both, men and women.

They'd say things like: "You need to do more of this, less of that."

"You need to smile more; you squinch your forehead too much."

"You're too aggressive, Amber."

Then the next year, it was: "You don't speak up enough—you're too quiet."

It was exhausting—I felt like I was constantly chasing my tail.

Sacrificing who I was.

And I began to wonder if it was like this everywhere in big industry.

I longed for the day when no one cared if I had dirt smudges across my face.

Especially when it came to advice about my personal life.

Because, early on in my career, there were a few challenges to navigate.

I got married.

Had two beautiful children.

Then I got divorced.

And during this period, my sister was going through a difficult time.

So, she and my niece—who was a small child at the time—came to live with me.

All of this had an impact, of course.

It meant I had to juggle my work and my personal life.

And I felt I had to do it without anyone seeing any effect on me at all.

The mental weight was often immense.

Today, my niece is still with me.

She's now 21 and in college.

And she also has a job.

I also remarried.

And my husband, Adam, had three children already.

So, we are very used to juggling work and family.

But back then, you'd think my career was over.

At that time, I was helping my sister to get back into school.

And I wanted—and needed—to be around to support her and my niece.

But senior leaders at my company wanted me to take a new role that required me to move.

I told them what I was trying to balance.

And that I needed some time to make sure my sister was successful in restarting.

They said that making the choice to stay meant my career was over.

That is literally what they said.

And you guessed it, they said: "It couldn't be done."

At the time, all these experiences helped me to ask myself a few questions.

"Can I not compete?"

"Are my priorities wrong?"

"Am I just not cut out for this sector?"

I expect many of you have faced similar questions.

So, I took time to reflect on myself, and I prayed a lot!

And I made up my mind.

I said to myself: "I am a good person.

"And I am good at what I do.

"It can be done! And I will show them!"

It was at that time that three things became clear to me.

And these have put me in good stead ever since.

The first lesson: don't try to live up to other people's expectations.

Most of the time, they are misplaced, anyway.

That doesn't mean do not listen to other people's points of view.

Or acknowledge your weak spots.

We should, for sure.

But don't be overly influenced by other people's prejudices.

People will always see things through their own lens.

But what's right for somebody else, may not be right for you.

You need to make your own way.

And you need to deliberately decide what that is.

The second lesson I learned was that 'life happens.'

I used to look around at colleagues and believe that the ones moving up were free from distractions.

Usually men.

But also, women who didn't have children who had an impact on their time.

I was wrong.

We all have personal stuff going on.

It could be kids to look after.

But it could also be ageing parents who need our attention.

Or siblings, pets.

It could be something related to health and wellbeing.

Or even just life admin.

All these things take time and energy.

And that's ok.

And once we realize that everybody has things going on, we tend to be more understanding of other people's needs.

Even now, as a leader at bp, I must balance work and home life.

Yes, sometimes, I have to work weekends.

Or days on end.

I'm often travelling, too.

But equally, if I'm needed at home, then I go.

Simple as that.

It's about give and take.

Life happens.

So, let's all be kinder and more helpful to each other.

Understand that we all have things going on away from work.

Things that you often don't see.

And I believe the things that happen in our personal life can help our professional lives.

It gives us perspective.

Grounds us as people.

Makes us more efficient.

And it makes us more resilient.

Which leads me to my final lesson.
That's about seeking and giving honest feedback.
I've been guilty in the past of taking things so personally.
Getting upset about feedback.
Letting it sit with me for days.
The reality is that we won't like everything people say to us.
That's life.
And I'm not talking insults or bad behaviour.
There's no place for that.
But we cannot be offended by everything, either.
Sometimes, we have to take feedback on the chin.
Hani, my business advisor, is here today.
She's fantastic.
Where are you, Hani?
She'll tell you that I'm a straight talker.
I say things how they are.
It's not personal.
I just want us to do the best we can.
I'd like to think that Hani and my team give me honest feedback, too.
My teams are colleagues and friends.
But we're honest with each other as well.
That's how we succeed together.
And today, I have a dream job…
A tough job…
But a great job as a leader at bp.
And right now, we need to have honest conversations about the scale of the challenge our industry is facing.
Not only does our industry need to continue to provide the world with the energy it wants and needs.
But it also needs to transition to net zero emissions.
And there are plenty of people who say that our industry isn't up to the challenge.
That it cannot be done.
Yes, it is a complex challenge.
And it requires our best engineers, scientists and innovators on the case.
Many of those people are women.
People like many of you here today.
And we know, don't we ladies, that it can be done?
And with that, I'll leave you with some of the words from Edgar Guest's 'It couldn't be done' poem.
Words that have served me well.
I have modernized it by changing 'he' to 'she.'
But it's our conference today…
So, I figure, what the heck! We can do what we like.
So here goes:
Somebody said that it couldn't be done
But she with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't," but she would be one
Who wouldn't say so till she'd tried.
So she buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On her face. If she worried she hid it.
She started to sing as she tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and she did it!
Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;"
But she took off her coat and she took off her hat
And the first thing we knew she'd begun it.
With a lift of her chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
She started to sing as she tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and she did it.
So, there you have it, Houston.
My ask of you is this…
When they say you cannot, go do it.
Take off your coat.
And take off your hat.
And go to it.
Thank you so much for having me.
And thank you for listening today.

WINNER: HEALTHCARE

"HealthWells"

Written and delivered by Jeffrey Flint,
President, Flint Speechwriting

//

Delivered to the San Francisco Debate Club,
May 8, 2024

I have some news for you. Being alive costs money.

In your lifetime, you can expect to pay $360,000 for transportation, $356,000 for housing, and $430,000 for food. These are all expenses that are necessary to live; you might say, required to live. There is a big one missing. Who here can guess? Right. Healthcare. Who here can guess how much money it takes to pay for a lifetime of healthcare?

About $1 million.

That's the number that someone, somewhere will have to pay to get you to the doctor for your entire life. Just like your need for food, you cannot insure against it. It's going to happen. And someone needs to pay for it.

My argument to you today is that this someone should be you. Not only should this someone be you, but it needs to be you, because if it is you, the cost of your healthcare will decrease, the cost of everyone's healthcare will decrease, and our nation's debt of $100,000 for every man, woman, and child will decrease.

All that needs to happen is for you to pay your own medical bills.

Don't be so shocked. It's actually you anyway, so why not make it official? After all, who pays all of the healthcare premiums, Medicare taxes, state and federal and local taxes that are used to fund the $1 million for every lifetime?

You.

To see how you and only you paying for your medical care would reduce the cost of healthcare for everyone, let's first pretend that you are lucky. You are lucky because you started life with the $1 million bank account that can pay for your lifetime's medical expenses. And because this amount would have to last a lifetime, you would be critical of every medical expense, and so you would probably comparison-shop. Right? Now, next pretend that everyone in the country had this same good fortune of a $1 million medical account at birth. Since everyone would be aware that this money would need to last a lifetime, everyone would probably comparison-shop. Right? What would happen if everyone shopped for their healthcare? The price of healthcare would become just like the price of food, subject to competition, and the cost of everyone's healthcare would drop. The price of food is reasonable because everyone can comparison-shop for their food. We can do the same for healthcare. Our healthcare costs are too high because no one now can comparison-shop for their medical expenses.

Of course, almost no one has a $1 million medical bank account at birth. But here is something that will work just as well.

Imagine that, instead of a lifetime of expenses in their medical bank account, the medical bank account had the funds to pay for all of their medical expenses for just, for just, the next year. What would happen then? The same. Knowing that these funds would have to last an entire year, people seeking care would be critical of every medical expense and would likely comparison-shop, thereby decreasing the cost of healthcare for everyone.

But, you may ask, what if someone gets cancer? Cancer costs can easily exceed the expected annual medical costs. The answer: Each person gets insurance to cover any medical expenses that exceed the size of their medical bank account.

Let's look at a concrete example. In 2023, according to the Peterson Center on Healthcare, every US health consumer aged greater than 55 years old could expect to consume, on average, about $25,000 in medical expenses, including their insurance premiums. So, if every US health consumer over 55 had $25,000 in their medical bank account at the start of 2023, each of those consumers could expect that all of their 2023 medical expenses would be met by their medical bank account. And if, a consumer gets a cancer or other diagnosis that forces their annual health costs to exceed that $25,000, their insurance would kick in and pay for all of those costs.

How did we know that the health expenses were going to be about $25,000 for each of the over-55 folks in 2023? Because that's about what the costs were in 2022.

But what if a person cannot afford to annually place $25,000, or whatever their expected annual medical expenses are, in their medical bank account? The answer: The government redirects the money we now spend on Medicare and Medicaid to bolster the medical bank accounts of those that need the financial help. That way, every health consumer, whether wealthy or poor, would be on the same financial footing. Everyone, whether wealthy or poor, would use their medical bank account to pay for their medical expenses. So there wouldn't be any social stigma.

By the way, I'm guessing you may be curious how much money you would need in your medical bank account each year to pay for your expected medical expenses. In 2023, actual medical expenses for kids were about $5000, for young adults about $8000, for mature adults about $13,000, and as was said, for those over 55, about $25,000 a year. Do you find those

amounts astonishing? Me too. That is why I'm making this proposal to you today.

Let's review. Here is a concise statement of my proposal:

1. People pay all of their medical expenses from a dedicated medical bank account called a "HealthWell".

2. People buy insurance to protect against their annual medical costs exceeding the amount of money in their HealthWell. Governments contribute as needed, based upon need, to HealthWells in order to make the premium affordable.

3. Medicare and Medicaid are eventually replaced by HealthWells.

And here are what I see to be the benefits of my proposal:

1. A decrease to the cost of healthcare by making plain its expense and thereby encouraging price competition.

2. A new stability to the US debt by removing the annual deficit, which is about the combined cost of Medicare and Medicaid.

3. An encouragement to people to invest in themselves, to take care of themselves, which will also reduce the cost of healthcare for everyone.

I am talking about rearranging the chairs, but not vacuously. I want to make plain the cost of our health care. I want the people themselves, not third-parties, to pay for it. Our healthcare costs are too high because no one knows the price they are paying.

Usually when we buy insurance, it is to protect against something that rarely occurs. Like our house burning down. The need for healthcare is not a surprise we can insure against. All of us are going to die. But to live, we need to pay for our food, and we need to pay for our healthcare. Being alive costs money.

And now I have some time for questions.

Actually, before I get to the questions, there is a little something more that I'd like to add that might address the questions you have: This plan would not cause the cost of healthcare to drop immediately. The reduction in costs would come over time as the healthcare system is transformed into a market. Right now, we don't have a market. No one knows what doctor X charges or the history of success of doctor X. That would change if each individual seeking health care wanted to know that information. And it would change if healthcare institutions could get sued for charging more than their listed prices.

Furthermore, at inception, the proposal would have the government exact exactly the same amount of medical taxes as we have now. And as I previously mentioned, the change would be that the medical taxes received by the government would be redirected to the HealthWells according to need, so as to make each individual able to afford their insurance. Right now, the government pays for fully 49% of the healthcare expenses (49%!), which equals about $7000 for every man, woman, and child in the US. That's a lot of support for HealthWells. Over time, as healthcare costs decline, these taxes will decline and the need for government support will decline. The US debt will decline, and, eventually, most people will pay the entirety of their own healthcare.

I can envision an entire industry of "medical financial advisors" that will help people with their medical decisions, to help them optimize the spending of their HealthWells, similar to how investors seek help from a fiduciary with their stock investments. For example, when you get that MRI, how do you know your money is being well-spent? In other words, how do you know that the MRI will likely increase your future good health? Right now, doctors are in the predicament of both making the best medical decisions for their patients, and making the best business decisions for their practice or hospital. That's neither fair to the doctors nor to the patients. HealthWells resolves this conflict by giving patients the supreme authority over where their medical dollars are spent.

Finally, I'd like to end with a nod towards the goodness of shopping. That sounds amusing, right? That shopping is "good"? But think about it. Every time any of us discriminates on quality or price; that is, every time any of us finds a better product for cheaper; that is, every time any of us "shops", we have made that good a little bit less expensive, and of the same or better quality, for the next shopper. Active shopping is a public good, a moral good, because it increases the access and the quality of all goods for all. HealthWells can do that for healthcare. Let's bring the moral goodness of shopping, to healthcare.

And now I do have some time for questions.

WINNER: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT and CRISIS COMMUNICATION

"Digging Deep to Inspire Perseverance"

Written and delivered by Lissa Druss, Director, Riot Hospitality Group

//

Delivered at the Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce Women in Leadership series, Scottsdale, Arizona, Aug. 8, 2024

Scottsdale Chamber

Thank you so much. I cannot tell you what an honor it is to be invited here today. Mark Stanton, Tina Miller, and Stephanie Miller—you are amazing ambassadors of the Chamber.

I would like to say hello to our elected officials who are here today.

Mayor David Ortega and Councilmember Tammy Caputi.

I am very proud to be here with Riot Hospitality Group. We are a premier national hospitality management company based in Scottsdale that focuses on restaurants, nightlights, and hotel food and beverage. We have 14 locations across the country: Denver, Nashville, Gilbert, and, of course, Scottsdale. Here we have restaurant concepts Farm & Craft, HandCut Chophouse, our partnership with Seven in the Caesars Republic Hotel, and nightlife venues: Riot House, El Hefe, Cake, District, Maya Dayclub, and Dierks Bentley's Whiskey Row.

Next year will be Riot Hospitality Group's 15th anniversary!

Our entire company was started by one man with ONE location—Ryan Hibbert. Our COO, Justin Cohen, joined him a few months later.

But let's say behind every great man is a greater woman. Well, let's just say at Riot Hospitality Group—it's women. MANY of the corporate leadership positions are held by a woman, and MANY of my colleagues are here today. Ladies, will you please stand up?

Our relationship with the Chamber is amazing, and the relationships we have built over the years are monumental. And I must brag that Riot Hospitality Group is the current reigning Scottsdale Chamber Big Business Sterling Award winner!

So, what exactly do I do? As the company's national government affairs director, I create and manage our relationships with elected officials in the cities where we operate. As a board member and executive director of our foundation, Riot Gives Back, I also manage our relationships with our first responders. And whenever life gives us a hiccup, I help manage those things, too… including the media.

Let me take you back to 2020. The FIRST case of Covid in the state of Arizona was one of our employees. THAT made news. And then more and more cases were showing up.

We are a company that cares.

We voluntarily shut down our venues in Old Town on a Thursday evening—before anyone else did—because we were more concerned with safeguarding our employees and limiting the number of people in Old Town—we chose to be a leader over profit. The next night, Governor Ducey shut everyone down.

Closing early was the right thing to do.

I've been spending some time talking about Riot Hospitality Group's brand. But if you take one thing away from today—remember that while you may work for a company or an entity that has a brand, you also have your own brand. And THAT is the most important brand that you must build, nurture, grow, and, in my case—at an early age, protect.

My brand first took a hit in college.

I was the television studio at the U of A, and as a junior LOVING my major, my professor told me—I was never going to make it. Crushing to hear. But being Italian, I'm a bit hard-headed, and I said—Fuck it, and worked even harder… because I knew I was going to LOVE being a television news journalist.

In the Spring of my Junior year, I went home and cold-called EVERY television station in Chicago…

And Channel 2 invited me in for an interview. They had filled every position, but they found a spot for me.

It changed my life.

A few months after graduating college, Channel 2 gave me a full-time job…at age 21…in the most ruthless newsroom in the nation. I was there just a few weeks when a woman started a rumor that I only got my job because I was sleeping with my boss.

With that comment, I knew I had to protect my brand.

While I started at KVOA in Tucson, I spent most of my career with CBS in Chicago and in Los Angeles as a manager and a producer.

In Los Angeles, I covered the OJ Simpson trial with this guy… Harvey Levin. You might know him from a little show called TMZ. 30 years later, Harvey and his partner Andy are still DEAR friends of mine… as this photo was taken just a few months ago!

Do you recognize this guy? That's some guy named Lester Holt. He is the NBC Nightly News anchor. This is Lester and me in El Salvador in 1997. Back at Channel 2 in Chicago, I was his producer for his international stories. By the way, our bosses at the time at Channel 2 also told Lester he was never going to make it.

I segued into sports, becoming one of the first women executive producers of a sports department in the coun-

try. Ultimately, I covered three Super Bowls, five of the six Chicago Bulls championships-countless other events.

Doing post-game interviews with Michael Jordan and Dennis Rodman was natural for me.

I had a blessed career in news and sports—and yes, I won 9 Emmys J

(Pause)

But then, one day, I got a call from my best friend in sports—Willard who worked at CBS Sports in New York. He told me that he was on the phone with Norm. Norm was an older producer in my sports department, and I essentially leap-frogged over him to become the executive producer of our sports department. Norm made the comment to Willard, "Yeah, you can talk to the blonde producer about that—she walks around with a mattress on her back."

Now, I saw women do unethical things in their careers to try and get ahead… and that's why I worked so hard on my brand to NOT have that reputation. What Norm said to Willard crushed me. To this day, I remember where I was when Willard told me this.

Then, it got worse.

Years later, I was the executive producer at Comcast SportsNet, a sports network that I helped launch in six cities—but this story takes place in Chicago. I was married, and my husband at the time worked for the Chicago Bears in media relations. It's 4-something in the afternoon. I'm in the newsroom, sitting at my desk, listening to afternoon sports talk radio, and I hear the hosts who I know, start talking about me. And one of the hosts was apparently in a foul mood and said, "When you look up the word bitch in the dictionary, you'll see a picture of Lissa. And don't worry, you can have her. Everyone else has."

I'm sitting at my desk. The radio is on, but in a bustling newsroom, no one heard it. I'm looking around, like, hello. What did Chicago sports radio fans just hear? Did anyone hear that?

Well, I called my then-husband. So, he's driving home from work… listening to a sports host that made $600-hundred thousand dollars a year—that he must deal with daily—saying awful things about his wife… the mother of his child.

Silently, I'm thinking—did this happen to me again?

The host was suspended for three days but ended up "taking time off" for four weeks.

I'm a working mother who was just slandered on the air. While I was confident in who I was, my brand took a major hit. This time, it was public. I became the subject of many news stories in Chicago. I was actually part of a Wikipedia page documenting this incident. And all I could think was thank God my daughter was just one year old… too young to even know what happened.

What doesn't kill you makes you stronger, right?

Fast forward… In 2010, I said it was my time to leave the business of television news that it became, and I took my 21 years of storytelling for television and turned it around and told stories for my clients… or kill stories—in crisis communication. Lol

Now, I have the brand of a successful, accomplished journalist with a Rolodex a mile deep… and public defamation of my brand is in the past.

So, I started working on everyone else's brand. I joined an old friend, Thom Serafin, at his firm, Serafin & Associates, a strategic communications and public affairs firm in Chicago.

This was a scenario of not being at the right place at the right time. But I was the right person doing the right things at the right place and time.

It was natural for me. My years covering politics had groomed me to work in politics with ease.

My years of being a television news producer, shoving a mic in someone's face and asking the hard questions, groomed me to be a skilled crisis communicator.

At Serafin, I learned the art of "If you don't manage your message, someone will manage it for you."

As a journalist, I always worked with people like Thom Serafin, who would be spokespersons for a company or an event. But I never understood until I went into private practice how much skilled communicators could spin a response to protect a brand… a company's brand or your own personal brand.

Yep. It's called spin.

After spending eight years with Serafin, Thom and I started talking, and we both thought it would be a good time for me to branch off and start my own firm. Thom is such a wonderful man that he let me take three of my clients, and his son, with me to launch

Strategia Consulting—Strategia is the Italian word for Strategy.

But, now, I was a single mom, and I went from earning $200K+ a year with insurance and benefits… to nothing guaranteed. My regular paycheck was GONE.

Scared. Yup. Crazy? Yup. Excited. Yup. Nervous… I was a journalist for all of my life. I never took ONE business class. How do I start a company? How do I pay my mortgage? How do I provide for my 13-year-old daughter?

Early on, as a business owner, I made mistakes. I trusted the wrong people. At one point, I was $60K in debt. I paid everyone else before I got paid. I was making enough money to make the minimum monthly payment on my Citibank card, so I could have enough room on my credit card to buy groceries and gas… every month. But I KNEW my craft. I knew hard work would pay off, and it ultimately did because 100% of my clients came from referrals. I kept going.

And then, fast forward to one of my FAVORITE days ever… December 1st, 2019.

A political friend of mine introduced me to Ryan Hibbert because he thought we would make a good team. I quickly formed an inseparable bond with Ryan and our legal counsel, Alicia Casale, and kept getting involved in more and more things with Riot. We have a marketing department that does an amazing job promoting our locations… I work to promote our company's brand across the country

and build strong government and community relations.

The culture of Riot Hospitality Group is what makes our company special. Not only do we care about each other inside the company, but we also care about the communities in which we operate.

In Nashville, we have two locations and are adding a third! Do you know that for a city their size, they have 40 city council members? And, back to the successful women thing… the largest caucus is the women's caucus! We recently held a reception at our HandCut Chophouse honoring the women's caucus.

In Denver, almost a year ago, there was a shooting outside, near our Dierks Bentley's Whiskey Row. Lives were saved because of the heroic actions taken by many members of the Denver Police Department. In true Riot fashion, we held an event honoring the men and women of DPD for their actions.

There is nothing like seeing an officer get recognized!

And back here at home, Riot Gives Back is at ALMOST as many events as Mayor Ortega is… lol We are sponsors of the Fire Department and Police Department's various charity events; Scottsdale Community Partnerships and many more… and we are working with Scottsdale police department on a special event that I can't announce yet!

In our foundation's young age of three years old, we've supported more than 80 organizations across the country.

I'm using my brand to expand our Riot relationships. About six months ago, I was asked to be the first woman board member of the Arizona Italian American Chamber of Commerce, and I'm striving to become part of more organizations outside of the hospitality realm while still cultivating connections for our company.

There is only one thing I am more proud of than all my work as a journalist and with Riot—my daughter. Tessa Rose is sitting here with the women of Riot!

She grew up with a working mom who never put the phone down and answered crisis calls during her softball games or while making dinner at home. She's grown up hearing me talk to senators, congressmen, mayors, CEOs, and law enforcement sources. It was nothing for her to wake up in the morning with me rolling a suitcase towards the door and she would say, "Where are you going today, Mommy?" and I would say, "Just to DC; I'll be back tomorrow." and she would say, "Okay mommy!"

And years later, she accompanied me to DC twice and even voted on THREE bills in the House… thanks to our friend and then-Congressman Rodney Davis of Illinois

Tessa will be the first one to tell you that I do not know how to relax. But that's okay for me. She has been at my side, witnessing how hard work pays off and learning that trust is everything. If a person crosses my daughter or me… watch out. Don't forget. We are Italian.

Tessa is building her own brand and will move into her dorm at the University of Arizona, Eller School of Management, in 12 days. She will finally take business courses that I never took… because after school, she wants to come work with me because she LOVES what we do.

In the beginning, I asked if you take away one thing: it's building your personal brand. Well, I lied. I'm going to leave you with three things.

Build your brand.

What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

And hard work DOES pay off.

WINNER: PHILOSOPHY AND/OR RELIGION

"A Layman's Sermon: The Flag of Mercy Flies Over Utrecht"

By Johan Kroes for Sharon Dijksma,
Mayor of Utrecht

//

Delivered at Nicolaïkerk,
Utrecht, the Netherlands, May 19, 2024

Dear congregation,

During the New Year's gathering, I expressed the hope that this would be the year of compassion. Therefore, I thought it would be meaningful to reflect with you on the story of the Good Samaritan, as we have just read from Luke 10.

As any good sermon should, I would like to share three lessons from this Bible story with you. These lessons revolve around three words: doing, learning, and seeing.

[Doing]

The first—and perhaps the most important—point is that compassion is better practiced than discussed. Look at the beginning and end of the story. The expert in the law asks, "Who is my neighbor?" The story ends with the command: "Go and do likewise."

Rather than questioning who your neighbor is, Jesus calls us in this story to be a neighbor to those in need.

The expert in the law wanted to start a debate, to test Jesus, to assert his correctness. We see similar behavior today, where the focus is more on who is right, scoring points with one's audience, rather than actually taking action. For example, this happens when discussing refugee care.

I find it inspiring to see how the Nicolaï Church draws inspiration from the seven works of mercy mentioned in the Bible and tries to bring these to life in a contemporary way. By raising money for food banks, organizing meals for the lonely, undocumented, homeless, or by writing cards to prisoners.

Some of you go to great lengths in your commitment to society. Recently, I had the honor of awarding Agnes van der Vecht and Peter Nieuwenhuizen Royal Decorations for their years of dedication, and I am convinced that there are more candidates for such an honor here…

During the National Remembrance of the Dead two weeks ago at Domplein, I asked people what they do when confronted with injustice, need, and suffering. I also mentioned that sometimes it can all feel so overwhelming that we'd rather close the door to it. But I believe we always have the ability to do something, no matter how small or ordinary it may seem.

The challenge is not to be overwhelmed by the enormity of suffering in the world but to act upon the one thing you can see. Often, this means more than we think.

Take, for example, the story of a British teacher who, in 1970, began sponsoring a young Kenyan boy named Douglas Wakiihuri. Through this sponsorship, Douglas became part of an aid program where he received education and food. The teacher and Douglas regularly exchanged letters. From his letters, the teacher understood that Douglas had low self-esteem and little hope for the future.

Douglas wrote: "Dear sponsor, here is a photo of me. You can see that I'm not very handsome." The teacher replied: "I believe you're mistaken. Your photo is on my desk. I look at you every day and think you're very handsome."

In another letter, Douglas wrote: "Thank you for your kind words, but you can see from my report that I'm not very smart. I'm sorry." The teacher replied: "I assure you that you are as smart as God wants you to be so that you can do what He wants you to do. Just do your best."

Over the years, the teacher's encouragement bore fruit. Douglas gained more confidence. At the age of eight, he wrote: "Guess what I just discovered? I found out that I can run faster than anyone in my class. There are five of us, and I'm the fastest!" The teacher replied: "It's important to be good at something. I'm proud of you. Make sure you become the best runner you can be."

Douglas took her advice to heart and began running. A few years later, he wrote: "Guess what? I now run faster than all the other children at school." The teacher encouraged him again, and Douglas continued running. He began entering competitions and started winning. Eventually, during the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, he won a silver medal in the marathon. The once-sponsorship boy who thought he couldn't do anything had achieved a world-class accomplishment.

This year marks my thirtieth year in politics. During this time, I've dealt with issues on local, regional, national, and even global levels. I'm proud to have contributed, as a negotiator for the Dutch government and the EU, to the Paris Climate Agreement—a historic accord at the time.

At the same time, it is often the small things that have an even greater impact. For example, visiting a 100-year-old resident, awarding someone a medal, or inviting a person with concerns or criticism for coffee.

There is also so much I cannot influence, and unfortunately, there are only 24 hours in a day, meaning you can't do everything.

We might feel guilty or powerless about this, but the story of the Good Samaritan helps put it in perspective.

The Samaritan helps generously, even taking personal risks because the injured man could have been bait for robbers waiting to ambush potential helpers. He takes the time to clean and

bandage the wounds and brings the man to an inn. The next morning, he pays the innkeeper two days' wages—enough for about two weeks of lodging—and promises to cover additional costs upon his return.

Yet, there were things the Samaritan didn't do. He could have stayed longer at the inn or taken the injured man home to care for him personally. That would have been truly radical, wouldn't it? However, the Samaritan likely had other responsibilities, such as his trade and family. He knew his limits and delegated further care, much like we do when we donate to aid organizations.

While it's beautiful that he helped this one injured man, it's just a drop in the bucket. He didn't tackle the root of the problem. The bandits were still out there in the hills, and tomorrow, ten more travelers might be attacked on the same road. Did his compassion really make a difference?

I am reminded of Mother Teresa's saying: "Our work may be a drop in the ocean. But if we don't pour that drop, it will be missing forever."

The Samaritan did what he could and felt free not to do what he couldn't. That's a beautiful lesson. You don't need to wait until you can address root causes. Do what your hands find to do. Live unreservedly, lovingly, and seize every day's opportunity to brighten the life of a passerby.

Compassion often begins with small acts, simply picking up what comes your way. At the National Remembrance at Domplein, I also shared the story of Henk Das, a prominent resistance fighter in this region during World War II. One day, someone from his local korfball club rang his doorbell, asking if he would donate money to help people in hiding. Of course, Henk agreed. Could he also collect donations door-to-door? And perhaps find safe houses for those in hiding? That's how Henk became involved in the resistance.

Compassion is, above all, a matter of doing.

[Learning]

The second lesson from the story is that you might learn the most from those you find strange. Adopting a learning attitude is one of the answers to polarization in society.

In my New Year's speech, I said that "the flag of mercy flies literally and figuratively over Utrecht." This is literally embedded in Utrecht's flag, as the red and white refer to Saint Martin, who cuts his cloak in half to give one part to a beggar.

Saint Martin, the patron saint of Utrecht, represents mercy. This means compassion, kindness, and grace towards others, especially those in difficulties, those who have made mistakes, or those in need of help. It's about showing understanding, empathy, and generosity without passing judgment.

At that time, I expressed my concerns—and those concerns have not diminished—about how people treat each other these days, often with hostility and distrust. This does not contribute to mercy. I called for people to reach out to each other, to talk, and to withhold judgment.

Unfortunately, we see too often today that people are quick to pass judgment. But let's beware of black-and-white thinking, as it leads to polarization. This causes groups to grow apart and even to oppose each other, much like the Jews and Samaritans of that time.

Before I continue, I want to emphasize that we should be cautious with labeling things as polarization. It doesn't mean there should be no differences of opinion. In a democracy, there is freedom of speech. Differences of opinion do not inherently lead to polarization. Whatever you say or do, someone will always disagree. But when you conclude that someone with a different opinion is inferior, bad, or has fewer rights, polarization becomes a divisive force in society.

Polarization also forces the middle to choose sides—to either be with you or against you. If you're not for us, you're against us. An example of this is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The atrocities of this war appeal to people's need to take a side, and some can be quite forceful in this regard.

The extremes erode the middle ground more and more, leaving less room for silence and contemplation. But it is precisely the quiet middle that can act as a counterforce—by not choosing a side, by suspending judgment, by having compassion for both sides, and by not excluding anyone. Giving people the feeling that they are not dismissed but are seen can work to depolarize.

But how do you do that? The story of the Good Samaritan shows that it all revolves around the attitude you adopt—an open and learning attitude. Because you might learn the most from those you find strange.

When Jesus mentioned the third traveler, the Samaritan, I suspect the listeners expected him to further mistreat the victim. If the priest and the Levite had done nothing, how much worse must the Samaritan—a sworn enemy—be? There had been recent violent attacks between the groups, and tensions were high.

Jesus turned this enemy figure into a role model. This surprised the listeners, and probably irritated them as well. Try this for yourself: if you're annoyed by right-wing people, imagine this story with a helpful right-wing person. If you distrust left-wing people, imagine a left-wing person as the hero. Do this with any group you disapprove of or find difficult. Imagine that such a person does something you deeply admire. How does that feel?

The best way to truly empathize with someone else is to meet and talk to them. In my experience, genuine encounters are the best way to get to know the person behind the opinion. To discover that the other also has struggles and passions. And maybe you'll even find the "common ground." Don't look for differences; look for similarities.

Even in the city of Utrecht, this common ground exists. When the Tour de France started here. After Putin invaded Ukraine. Around the commemoration of the tram attack. At such times, people feel connected.

Seeking similarities, learning from each other—it's a different mindset.

And that is the mindset we see, for example, in the Allies' Consultation in Utrecht, where representatives of different religions talk to each other. I see this consultation as a pillar of peace in the city. This open and learning attitude is the answer to polarization.

[Looking]

My third—and final—point is that mercy begins with the way we look at others.

The Samaritan approached the wounded man and saw the same thing the priest and the Levite saw. Or did he? I've been told that, in the original text, a subtle difference in their acts of seeing is indicated. The priest saw the wounded man lying there, pressed himself against the rock wall, stepped over the injured man, and immediately walked on. Of the Levite, it is said that he stopped to take a closer look at the wounded man. However, what he saw displeased him, so he turned his head away and continued walking.

The priest and the Levite saw a problem—delay, danger, impurity. The Samaritan saw an opportunity. An opportunity to show love to a fellow human being. He saw a person—injured, suffering, dying—and decided to help.

All three passersby saw the same scene, yet the Samaritan saw something different than the priest and the Levite. The Samaritan saw the wounded Jew, and what he saw touched his heart. In another translation, it says: "And when he saw him, he was moved with compassion."

This may be the most important word in the entire parable. It is because of this word that the Samaritan earned the nickname "merciful." In Greek, the word for compassion is splachnizomai. This word is an onomatopoeia—a word whose sound indicates its meaning. Splitting, tearing apart, breaking. What the Samaritan saw tore him apart inside. His heart cried out at the sight of the bloody, dying heap of humanity before him. And from this splachnizomai, he decided to act.

Seeing. Feeling. Acting. That's the sequence.

The Samaritan approached the dirty, bleeding, dying Jew. He knelt beside him, took off his cloak, tore his own clothes into strips, and dressed the man's wounds. He opened the provisions his wife had given him and poured oil and wine on the wounds—wine to disinfect and oil to soothe and heal. It wasn't ideal, but it was all he had.

Even today, we encounter wounded people everywhere. Recently, the new Utrecht Monitor was published, containing figures about the city's well-being. It shows that many residents of Utrecht are doing very well and are happy with their lives in the city.

That's wonderful to note, but this well-being is under pressure. For example, the number of households living in poverty remains stable, but every year more Utrecht households become dependent on a low income for a longer period. Additionally, one in five Utrechters feels discriminated against, and more residents than before feel lonely and/or marginalized. The situation of young people, in particular, is concerning. Over one in five young adults in Utrecht experienced severe loneliness, and substance use among Utrecht's youth is high.

Even today, the question is how we look at this. Does it leave us cold, or do we feel splachnizomai, compassion?

How each of us gives shape to mercy is a personal matter. My own motto, from a young age, has been that I don't want to remain silent when people are wronged, excluded, or when the values of our society are at stake. I quickly realized that this can provoke resistance, but if you persevere, even at some risk, it is worth it. You help others, and you grow stronger in the process.

Dear congregation,

When I think of the word "looking," I also think of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Today is Pentecost, and this weekend, the global Christian community reflects on this event.

As an agnostic, I find it difficult to believe that it all happened as described, but I appreciate how much inspiration believers draw from it.

The lives of Jesus' followers were radically changed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Acts, we read that Peter and John heal a man who has been paralyzed all his life. The miracle is not so much that this man is healed but that Peter and John suddenly stop at this man and truly see him.

That is what the Spirit aims to bring about—and everyone could use a little of that: eyes that see and a heart willing to give all you have. Even if it is nothing more than encouraging an uncertain boy in a faraway land, visiting an elderly woman wasting away in a nursing home, or cheering on a passionately playing child.

Amen

WINNER: PUBLIC POLICY

"Let's Shine a New Light on Adoption—and Make Adoption Easier for Birth Mothers—So More Women Choose It"

By Teresa Zumwald for Terri Marcroft,
Executive Director and Founder, Unplanned Good Inc.

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Delivered at the Live Action Lawmakers Summit, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Aug. 10, 2024

SETUP FOR TERRI MARCROFT'S KEYNOTE SPEECH:

Dominique Brown, a birth mother, opens by sharing her journey: In 2015, she became a single parent to her son, Easton, after an unplanned pregnancy. In 2017, she became a birth mother to a baby boy, her son Everett, placing him for adoption with a loving couple, Allie and Ryan. The intent of Brown's remarks: to help lawmakers understand what adoption is like today and what it means to be a birth mother.

TERRI MARCROFT'S KEYNOTE SPEECH:

I have to say: Over the years, I have heard Dominique tell her story many times. And every time, her story makes me feel so proud. So happy. So full of joy!

Because Dominique rejected abortion in 2015! And chose to become a single parent to her son, Easton.

It was hard: As a single mom, Dominique worked 12-hour days. Three jobs! And barely made ends meet.

Things didn't get any better.

When faced with an unplanned pregnancy a couple years later, Dominique decided she was not equipped to parent another child.

So she made another choice—a loving choice!—after someone helped her discover that adoption is an option. She placed her baby boy Everett with a loving couple who was eager to start a family.

Even though this too was hard—the hardest thing she'd ever done!—Dominique felt proud of her decision.

Grateful for the chance to choose Everett's parents and remain in Everett's life.

And she felt rewarded knowing her son was being raised in a happy, stable family, by a mom and a dad who were READY to parent.

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You may not know it, but Dominique's brave and loving choice to place her baby for adoption is RARE:

Just 1 percent of women facing an unplanned pregnancy will make the decision Dominique made.

JUST 1 PERCENT!

Truth is: Most people don't know that adoption is an option.

So they don't even consider it!

And that is why most women facing an unplanned pregnancy who CAN'T or DON'T WANT TO PARENT will choose abortion.

They do this because they are determined NOT to parent—no matter how much encouragement they receive. No matter how much help and support they get. No matter how many resources they are promised.

Women who make this decision know for sure—deep in their heart!—that parenting is impossible for them at this time in their life.

It is tragic, but true:

When women who CAN'T or DON'T WANT TO PARENT face the choice—abortion or single parenting—abortion to them seems like the only option.

In addition: When a woman finds out she's facing an unplanned pregnancy, she is AFRAID!

That news strikes fear in the heart of almost 3 million women a year!

These 3 million women don't want to be pregnant!

• They're afraid of bodily changes and weight gain.

• They're afraid of society's reactions and losing their relationships.

• They're afraid of labor and delivery.

• And they're afraid of parenting.

They are simply AFRAID!

So they choose abortion out of FEAR … unlike Dominique, who chose adoption out of LOVE.

Again, it is tragic, but true:

When women facing an unplanned pregnancy feel afraid and face the choice—abortion or single parenting—abortion to them seems like the only option.

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These are THE RAW TRUTHS.

And they are hard for all of us to hear.

But especially hard for all of you: The 70 pro-life lawmakers in this room who have fought so hard—for so many years!—to build a culture of life … defend the rights of the most vulnerable … encourage motherhood and fatherhood … strengthen families … and help women safeguard their physical, mental and emotional health.

On the other hand?

Maybe these raw truths are really a wakeup call since they compel us to ask two important questions:

First:

• What is our pro-life community doing to help women facing an unplanned pregnancy—just like Dominique—who either CAN'T or DON'T WANT TO PARENT?

• Are we helping them discover that adoption is an option?

Second:

• What is our pro-life community doing to help women facing an unplanned pregnancy who are AFRAID to be pregnant?

• Are we helping them see the downsides of choosing abortion? Downsides that include the serious harm abortion does to a woman's physical, mental and emotional health?

• Are we reaching them soon enough—before they face that unplanned pregnancy—since one in four teens will get pregnant before age 20?

• Are we helping them discover that adoption is an option?

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I believe these issues are a huge gap in our pro-life agenda.

So what can we do about it?

All of us have a role to play!

We can take the time to encourage. Educate. Advise. And motivate young women to consider adoption.

Because when we do?

Young women are 50 percent more likely to choose adoption.

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As lawmakers, you have an even bigger role to play!

Because here's ANOTHER RAW TRUTH:

Laws on the books in most states today make it EASIER for women to choose abortion but much HARDER for them to choose adoption.

Here's the first problem with our laws:

They don't shine a light on adoption.

You might not know it, but information about adoption—as it's ACTUALLY done today—is missing from the curricula in most public schools.

I know of only two states—Idaho and Arkansas—that mandate adoption education in public schools.

Plus, information about fetal development—which can affect people's views on abortion and adoption—isn't taught at most public schools either. Except in North Dakota and Tennessee, which passed the Baby Olivia law, thanks to all the work done by Live Action in recent years.

As a result of all this, our young people—and most people in general!—know very little about adoption and what it means to choose life.

There's a lack of EDUCATION about adoption.

So there's a lack of AWARENESS about adoption.

Which makes it harder for young women—the one in four who WILL GET PREGNANT by age 20—to see adoption as an option.

Here's the second problem with our laws:

They make adoption hard for birth mothers like Dominique.

Today, most laws benefit only the adoptive parents—not birth mothers.

In fact: Obstacles exist every step of the way for birth moms!

For example, court calendars are overloaded. So hearings to finalize adoptions get delayed for weeks or months.

Therapy and counseling may not even be offered.

And sometimes, adoptive parents break their promises to birth moms.

When this happens, birth mothers are HEARTBROKEN.

Our laws make a birth mother's journey HARDER than it already is! And MUCH HARDER than it has to be!

So even if a young woman facing an unplanned pregnancy has the good fortune to discover that adoption is an option—and then begins to consider it!—she will soon find out that the laws in her state are likely to be unfriendly to her.

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As people working to build a culture of life, we can do better.

And as pro-life lawmakers, YOU can take the lead!

YOU can champion legislation that shines a new light on adoption, and makes adoption easier for birth mothers, so more women choose it!

It … is … POSSIBLE!

Because this year in March—after working many long hours in the great state of Idaho with many fine legislators just like you—we got three new bills passed into law!

The first law, introduced as Senate Bill 1308, mandates adoption education.

Today, public schools in Idaho providing information about contraception and sexually transmitted diseases must ALSO provide information about adoption: current practices, local resources and the Safe Haven Act.

In addition: Public colleges and universities dispensing contraception or testing for disease must provide adoption information as well.

This law is GROUNDBREAKING!

And makes Idaho a leader in adoption education.

The second law, introduced as Senate Bill 1368, bans unlicensed matchmakers from placing children for adoption.

That's because unlicensed matchmakers take most of the budget but don't have trained staff and don't know state laws. Today, only licensed professionals—either agencies or attorneys—can arrange adoptions in Idaho.

The third law, introduced as Senate Bill 1309, removes the cap on a birth mother's allowable expenses and cuts red tape.

These laws supporting birth mothers will REDUCE the cost of adopting and INCREASE the quality of services for birth moms in Idaho.

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I am grateful and proud of all the lawmakers in Idaho who said YES to adoption and birth mother support.

Three of these lawmakers are here today: Senator Tammy Nichols … Representative Jacyn Gallagher … and Representative Heather Scott.

THANK YOU for your support last session.

And Idaho is not done yet!

Next session, we want to introduce at least four bills:

One requiring fetal development education, like what Live Action has done with the Baby Olivia video.

Plus, three more bills to help birth mothers so that court hearings to finalize adoptions happen faster … therapy and counseling are offered to every woman who's thinking about making an adoption plan … and voluntary agreements in open adoptions get written down, signed and filed so they are honored over time.

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Now some of you may be skeptical that changing the laws will encourage more women facing an unplanned pregnancy to choose adoption.

LET ME ASSURE YOU:

When young people discover that adoption is an option, some WILL choose it!

Just like Dominique did!

That's why we must start with EDUCATION and AWARENESS—with laws that shine a new light on adoption!—since adoption has changed so much in the last 25 years.

Used to be if an unmarried woman got pregnant, she was judged, shamed, rejected—and sent away.

She was forced to secretly endure the grief, pain and trauma of parting with her child forever.

And she was told to never speak of it again.

Today, birth mothers are empowered with CHOICES since most adoptions today have some degree of openness.

A birth mother today can CHOOSE the adoptive parents. Together, they decide what their ongoing relationship might look like and whether or how they will stay in touch.

There are NO SECRETS anymore!

Just so many POSSIBILITIES for loving relationships.

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A couple years ago, in a post on Facebook, (Live Action founder) Lila Rose said this:

"Adoption is love. Adoption is hard. Adoption is worth it."

And that is SO TRUE!

Because adoption today is SO AMAZING for EVERYONE involved: the birth mother … the adoptive couple … and the child.

And if more women KNOW THIS—if more women know how adoption is done today … and how empowered they are to make decisions … and what it feels like to create a family—more women facing an unplanned pregnancy WILL CHOOSE IT!

Despite the perception that abortion is quick and easy.

I know this because over the past 15 years, I've talked to countless women who still suffer physical, mental and emotional anguish because they chose abortion.

When I share with them how adoption is done today, many of them tell me the same thing:

"If I had known that adoption was an option, I would have chosen life."

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Believe me:

CHANGE … IS … POSSIBLE!

And it starts with YOU:

The boldest and bravest pro-life lawmakers right here who ALWAYS stand for life!

As you know, all 50 states have been fighting over abortion bans, restrictions and exceptions for many years.

And especially since the overturning of Roe v. Wade?

Arguments have ERUPTED.

For all of us in the pro-life community, it has been a challenging time. And the way ahead is still unclear.

But now we've discovered this huge opportunity in our pro-life agenda—this huge opportunity for legislative wins!—since adoption and birth mother support is HARD to argue with.

Think about this for a minute:

For years we've been fighting AGAINST abortion.

Now we have something to FIGHT FOR!

Because standing up for adoption and birth mother support is really ANOTHER PATH to pro-life!

ANOTHER WAY to build a culture of life by creating new families!

ANOTHER WAY as pro-life lawmakers to do what you always do: defend the rights of the most vulnerable … encourage parenthood … strengthen families … and help women safeguard their physical, mental and emotional health.

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Make no mistake:

Pro-adoption IS pro-life!

That's why we need laws that shine a new light on adoption, and make adoption easier for birth mothers, so more women choose it.

As pro-life lawmakers, YOU have the power to DO THIS!

• To build on the legislative work begun in states like Idaho!

• Champion new legislation in your own state!

• And enjoy what promises to be some legislative wins for your pro-life constituents!

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At any step along the way, I'd be honored to help and support you.

Today, I am sharing templates of several bills to get you started.

You can use this QR code to download these templates right now.

Later, if you need a speaker or want counsel on adoption best practices—and why they are so much better than before—call me.

And if you need testimony in committee later on?

I'll jump on a Zoom call and testify for you. Or come in person if I can.

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So let's get to work!

Let's fight for adoption and birth mother support—ANOTHER PATH to pro-life!

• This path is RATIONAL.

• This path is REAL.

• And this path is WITHIN YOUR REACH.

The only question now is THIS:

Will you DECIDE to TAKE IT?

Thank you.

WINNER: SOCIAL JUSTICE

"How to Be an Activist Who Creates Real Change"

By Brian Miller and Francisco Mahfuz for Carey Theil and Christine Dorchak, Founders, GREY2K USA Worldwide

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Delivered at the TEDxAlexanderPark, Duluth, Georgia, June 22, 2024

Christine: It's 2011 and I'm sitting at my desk in our basement office just outside Boston when a photo appears in my inbox. It's a stunning greyhound wearing a wire mask. This dog is being held at the worst racetrack in the world, the Canidrome in China, where no dog ever gets out alive. In this moment, I know just one thing: I have to save this dog.

Carey: See, 20 years earlier, Christine was taking her dog on a routine morning walk when they were run down by a speeding train.

Christine: My dog Kelsey pulled us from the direct path of an oncoming train, and when I awoke from my coma, I realized that my dog had saved my life, and that I had a debt to pay.

Christine: I pledged that if I should ever be able to walk and talk and care for myself again, that I would dedicate my life to helping dogs.

Carey: And so when Christine told me she was going to shut down a Chinese dog track, I thought she was crazy. But, I also believed her. Christine and I met as young activists during the first political campaign to outlaw greyhound racing in Massachusetts.

Carey: I was 22 years old and thought I knew everything.

Christine: Once, when we were arguing over strategy, he actually said to me, "I'm the smartest person you'll ever meet."

Carey: Yeah, I really said that.

Christine: In his defense, the Boston Globe did once refer to Carey as the wunderkind of the animal rights movement. He was a chess prodigy who would soon become a chess master.

Christine: Between his strategy and my tenacity, we thought we could change the world.

Carey: Each of us, even the most cynical politician, has a child inside who desperately wants to do something that is genuinely good. We all want to make a difference.

Christine: So we write letters, hold protests, wave our signs, and argue over social media. But nothing seems to get better.

Carey: Many times we lose faith in democracy and convince ourselves that lasting change cannot be achieved. All the while, the bad guys are actually engaging in the political process and getting what they want. And that is exactly what was happening with Greyhound Racing.

Christine: At one time, there were over 50, 000 dogs in the United States alone, enduring lives of confinement and suffering terrible injuries while racing. Greyhound Racing was a multi billion dollar gambling enterprise, formed in the 1920s by organized crime. Mobsters joined together with dog breeders and together they launched a business based on the exploitation of greyhounds. At its peak in the early 1990s, there were 70 operational tracks and 3.5 billion dollars bet each year on dogs.

Christine: In fact, dog racing was the sixth most popular spectator sport in America.

Carey: And so we decided, "Yeah, we can take that down." Now, to be fair, we weren't the first to try to do something about dog racing.

Christine: But the majority of activists took the standard approach, myself included. We held protests, we issued press releases, we even did stunts.

Once, when some local shock jocks were hosting a worst scar contest at the dog track, I decided to enter. After all, because of my accident, I did have a lot of scars. So he put me on air and asked, "What are you doing here?" I blurted out, "Greyhounds are dying and this place needs to be shut down!" Of course, they picked me right up and threw me right out the door.

Early on, we thought that just by exposing the industry that we would end it. It's just like young activists today who think that if a social media post gets enough likes and shares, the problem will take care of itself. But we've come to understand that change is not self executed.

Carey: Meanwhile, there were large, well funded animal protection groups who wouldn't fight the industry because they thought the dog tracks were too rich and too powerful to challenge.

Carey: So the question became, how do we change the world where so many others have failed?

One day, Christine was out protesting with her friends when a man driving by stopped his car and asked, "What are you doing? I'm shutting down this dog track. And he said, "No you're not! Protesting will never work. The only way to win is to take the issue directly to the voters." His name was David, and he had a deep history in local politics, so we tried to do just that.

Christine: Over the course of nine weeks, we would have to collect over 150,000 signatures by hand just to get a question on the ballot.

Carey: And our question to the voters was, should greyhound racing be outlawed in Massachusetts? We got the signatures and managed to raise 500, 000 to run a few TV ads. Sounds like a lot of money, but the track owners spent nearly 2 million fighting us.

Christine: On election night, I knew the greyhounds were going to win. We had collected all those signatures, and we were right. And when

the votes were tallied, it was 51 to 49—we had lost.

Carey: I was devastated. It wasn't just that we had lost. I knew the Greyhounds would continue to suffer and die because we had failed them. But when we think back on that first major defeat, we now realize it was a blessing. It fueled our fire to keep fighting. And so instead of giving up, we made a bold decision: We would form a national organization to shut down all the dog tracks in America, even though at that point, our track record was one loss… in one state.

Christine: And that was our first big lesson for successful activism: If you want to change the world, you must persist through failure.

Carey: And fail we did. Over the next decade, we tried to pass laws all across the country to help these gentle dogs.

Carey: To ban the drugging of greyhounds.

Christine: We lost.

Carey: To prohibit racing in extreme temperatures.

Christine: We lost.

Carey: To end dog track subsidies.

Christine: We lost again.

Carey: We kept losing over and over and over. Meanwhile, we had been sued for 10 million by a track owner. And the industry was using expensive lawyers to stop us from returning to the ballot. We knew we needed our own attorney, but we couldn't afford one. So, Christine had a brilliant idea.

Christine: Why don't I become a lawyer?

Carey: So for the next four years, she worked full time, fighting for greyhounds during the day, and attended law school classes at night.

Christine: Between Carrie's chess-like understanding of the political process and my new understanding of the law, we actually began to achieve some small victories. I realized that we needed evidence to make our case.

So, I wrote a bill to force DogTracks to report on greyhound injuries and deaths to the public for the very first time. This doesn't sound like a big deal, but it was a game-changer. Because once the dog tracks had to admit how many greyhounds were breaking their legs and dying, we were able to move past a "he said, she said" debate and allow the greyhounds to speak for themselves.

Carey: As we gained momentum and confidence, we started to build our own unique process for what successful activism could be. In 2008, we went back to Massachusetts where it all began. and asked voters to end greyhound racing. This time, the dogs won.

Christine: And just like that, two powerful dog tracks disappeared and over 2,000 greyhounds got the second chance they deserved.

Carey: Next stop, Florida.

Christine: In the United States, Florida was the beating heart of the racing industry with more tracks than all other states combined. There were not just two dog tracks, but twelve operating tracks in the Sunshine State.

Carey: After winning in Massachusetts, we thought there was nothing we couldn't do. But we were wrong. Over the next ten years, we fought for greyhounds in the Florida legislature and lost. We lost year after year. We tried everything that had worked so far and got nowhere for an entire decade.

Christine: Meanwhile, greyhounds continued to suffer and die. And just when we thought all hope was lost, we found something we never expected to find: a decent politician.

Carey: Believe it or not, they still exist. In 2018, he helped us bring the greyhound issue to the voters. It was a hard fought campaign. And I still remember being in the car on election day, listening to the radio as the first votes started to come in. First one county, then another. We looked at each other and said, "We might actually win this!"

When the night was over, a massive 69 percent of people had voted to end dog racing. This was the beginning of the end of greyhound racing in the United States.

Christine: That period of our lives taught us a second important lesson for successful activism: It's not just about changing minds, it's about changing the law.

Carey: So, it's 2011, and Christine's sitting at her desk in our basement office in Boston, when a photo shows up in her inbox. She sees the image of a beautiful dog trapped at the worst racetrack in the world where 400 greyhounds are killed each year.

Christine: His name was Brooklyn, and we set out to save him.

Carey: What had started in Massachusetts all those years ago was now spreading across the world. People had begun speaking up for greyhounds and demanding the end of dog racing, and Brooklyn became the face of this global movement.

Carey: We did everything we could think of to try and help him. We traveled to Macau. We spoke to the press. We even presented a petition to the mayor with the signatures of over 300,000 people, but we got nowhere.

Christine: But we just wouldn't give up. The turning point came when we reached out to the leader of a local animal shelter, who is politically savvy and very well connected. When we told him about all the greyhounds dying at the Canidrome, he said to us, "I will help you."

Carey: Even with the help of this new ally, it still took seven long years and a lot of campaigning. But eventually, the Macau government agreed to shut down the track. We airlifted 532 surviving dogs to rescue groups across the world. And on Valentine's Day 2019, we met Brooklyn for the very first time. Christine threw her arms around him.

Christine: I still couldn't believe he was alive. After spending so many years in a barren, concrete cell, he was very thin and had lost most of his teeth. His health issues were not over. Within weeks of joining our family, he was diagnosed with cancer. But Brooklyn was a fighter. He beat the odds and lived on for three glorious years. The best years of our lives.

Carey: Over the course of the last 25 years, we have learned many lessons for successful activism. First, that

you must be willing to persist through failure and even let it fuel you. Second, that you can't just change minds, you also must change the law.

Christine: And finally, the lesson that was most essential of all: successful activism is a marathon, not a sprint.

Carey: It's hard to imagine that a spotted dog would become the inspiration for a worldwide fight. That the campaign would end greyhound racing. And that after a decade of suffering, that same dog would come home to us. And yet, it happened. It proved to us that politics can still be a force for good.

Christine: And it's still possible to change the world.

WINNER: TECHNOLOGY and FOREIGN POLICY

"Testing Times, Bold Choices"

By Charles Crawford for Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary, Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation

Delivered at the Coral Bell School of Asia and Pacific Affairs, Canberra, Australia, Oct. 9, 2024

TESTING TIMES. BOLD CHOICES.

Let's start with testing times. Then the trials and tribulations and opportunities of multilateralism. And finally those bold choices.

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The Oppenheimer movie does its best. But it's hard to grasp now how our world changes on 16 July 1945 in New Mexico.

That first nuclear weapon test features a metal casing festooned with cables, roughly the size of a good home paddling pool. It's called 'the Gadget'.

It's heavy. It's hauled to the top of a steel tower. Legendary nuclear scientist Enrico Fermi is watching.

Nervous anticipation, excitement tinged with a little fear. Will the very atmosphere ignite? If so, will it destroy New Mexico? The whole planet?

The Gadget explodes.

Nothing like this has been seen in the Earth's 4.5 billion-year history. We humans have set free the energy trapped in small amounts of matter, creating a vast explosion.

21 days later, the world's first atomic bomb falls on Hiroshima.

Maybe some of you have visited Hiroshima. Last year, I took part in the annual commemoration of the bombing.

In the Hiroshima Peace Museum, I saw the tiny tricycle belonging to three-year old Shinichi Tetsunani. He'd been happily playing outside on his bike. Killed, along with his two sisters.

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First 'atomic bombs'. Then thermonuclear 'hydrogen bombs'.

As the Oppenheimer movie describes, the Big Questions are there right from the start:

Other states will acquire these staggering new weapons. Then what?

How to control all this? Who decides? How to stop cheating?

More and more tests. Bigger and bigger tests. In the air, in the sea, on the land. Twelve tests here in Australia.

Radioactivity spreads. Public concern rises.

Traces from those tests are detectable today. In our Great Barrier Reef. In deep mid-ocean trenches. In African elephant tusks. In Latin American trees.

Diplomatic wrangling continues. A central issue is verification. How to set up reliable, global detection—to prevent secret tests?

In 1963 the USA, USSR and UK sign the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. That treaty is clear! It prohibits nuclear explosions in the sea, the atmosphere and in outer space. Those tests are easy to detect.

And it's ambitious for what should follow! A speedy agreement on complete disarmament under strict international control. And a comprehensive test ban: no more underground tests either.

But a total ban on tests has to wait.

In 1968 comes the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Its preamble talks of seeking to achieve "the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time, and to continue negotiations to that end".

But nothing to make that a reality. The wait continues.

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By the time the NPT is agreed, there've been nearly NINE HUNDRED nuclear weapon tests.

Underground nuclear weapons tests continue. *At the dizzy rate of roughly one test per week, from 1968 until the Cold War ends.*

And the Cold War ends. A diplomatic 'window of opportunity' opens. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, or CTBT, is agreed in 1996.

Those States who signed the treaty establish a new international organisation to preside over the development of the crucial verification regime underpinning the treaty. That's the CTBTO—the organisation I lead today.

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Those five decades from 1945 through to 1996 were 'testing times'. Nuclear weapon testing times.

Before the CTBT was signed, there'd been more than two thousand nuclear weapon tests. Many far bigger than the bomb that devastated Hiroshima.

After the CTBT is signed? In the nearly three decades from 24 September 1996 when the CTBT was opened for signature, through to today, 9 October 2024?

Fewer than one dozen test events. In this current century, only ONE state has tested a nuclear weapon: North Korea.

By the standards of the past 80 years, we're no longer in nuclear weapon testing times. Testing has almost stopped.

The CTBT has been a dramatic success. With each day without a test, the global norm against these tests becomes that much more credible.

Nuclear weapon testing now is seen as outrageous and menacing. Something shameful. Morally repugnant. An insult to the environment. To humanity.

And that norm weighs on all states. Those that have signed and ratified the CTBT. And the now small number that haven't.

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Here I pay tribute to John Gee. He represented Australia as a leader in another long struggle in the arms control area. Ridding the world of chemical weapons. His contribution was immense at a critical time.

The result of the work of John and his colleagues? Chemical weapon stocks are now almost eliminated. Chemical weapon attacks are few and far between. And they too are seen as shameful and morally repugnant.

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The CTBTO and the OPCW are about verification. Using science and technology to build confidence and provide assurance. In fact, the CTBT was finally agreed because hard diplomacy and hard science came together.

By 1996 it was clear that any explosion, including underground test explosions could be detected using a range of technologies.

Under the CTBT, the International Monitoring System (IMS) was set up. And it's a wonder of today's scientific world.

We have 306 facilities around the planet, including remote stations in extreme environments: isolated islands, deserts, arctic tundra.

CTBTO's stations gather:

seismic data, vibrations in the Earth's crust

hydroacoustic data, vibration in the oceans

infrasound data, vibrations in the air

radionuclide data, radioactive particles and gases in the atmosphere.

Australia hosts 21 facilities, the third-most of any state in the network. From Antarctica to Alice Springs, Melbourne to Cocos Island. All CTBTO technologies are represented. A powerful, diverse and complex segment of our system.

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Friends—our planet is noisy!

Earthquakes. Landslides. Asteroid strikes. Explosions in conflicts. Mining-blasts. Whale sounds bouncing through the oceans. There's plenty going on out there!

Our system detects it all. It gathers a tremendous amount of valuable data—and it has been put to a vast array of different uses.

But, just say an explosion happens this very evening. A large and unusual one.

Our IMS network detects it in seconds: something significant has happened! IMS stations detect the vibrations and send the data to Vienna. Our computers compare these signals with all the planet's usual background noise.

Alarm bells start ringing within a couple of hours if the technical 'profile' of the event matches a nuclear test.

Where EXACTLY was that test? We'll have a pretty good idea, down to just a couple of kilometres, depending where exactly on earth the explosion happens. Testing in secret? Impossible!

Then the diplomacy starts.

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To play on the old quote about democracy:

Multilateralism is like a raft. You never sink, but your feet are always in the water!

The benefits of multilateralism are everywhere. The Internet protocols we use to chat around the world for free. Shipping routes. Air safety. Food export/import controls. Climate targets. Managing cross-border health threats. And of course—arms control and international security.

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Let me give you some examples of how multilateral principles affect CTBTO in practice.

Multilateralism is SLOW. The more states in the negotiations, the slower it gets. Each state raises its own concerns.

As we've seen in arms-control, negotiations drag on. Not for years. For decades!

It can also be slow for another reason. Money! Almost nothing gets governments fretting more than money.

How does CTBTO's own financing work?

Each state signatory has an 'assessed contribution', paid annually. There's a formula for that assessment. Larger, richer countries pay more.

We can run all those monitoring stations only if we receive the assessed contributions. We do well here. Most states pay on time, and in full.

Everyone knows that the IMS network is magnificent. But it costs a lot to maintain its high performance!

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So much for money!

Another feature of multilateralism is precision. States take great care when making legally binding agreements. We've agreed to this, and ONLY this!

I've mentioned the 'background noise' that our IMS system picks up as it looks for possible nuclear tests.

When you're looking for a sharp needle in a gigantic haystack, you get good at scrutinising a lot of hay! Every

day we take in 36 gigabytes of data. For the past seven years NONE of that data has indicated a nuclear test. And that's good!

But isn't all that data really useful for other things, like, studying earthquakes? Or tracking environmental changes? Or following whales? Yes it is! And that's what States and researchers do with that data.

I've already mentioned whales. Our data helped discover an entirely new subspecies of whale. They even made a film about it.

CTBTO data has also helped in response to some tragedies. Finding the Argentinian submarine, ARA San Juan, which tragically imploded in 2017.

Two of our remote hydroacoustic stations thousands of kilometres away from the disaster—in Ascension Island and the Crozet Islands—detected the implosion. The submarine was found within 20 kilometres of the location provided by the CTBTO.

Most significantly, our data is a powerful global resource for disaster warning. While our focus is detecting tests, we also provide data to tsunami warning centres around the world.

This helps governments and people to be ready to respond to the threat of disasters as quickly as they can.

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Another related big multilateralism point.

The data we collect does not 'belong' to the CTBTO. It is freely available to all our State Signatories—equally.

You need some serious technical capacity and scientific skill to take in these non-stop data flows and analyse them properly. We want those capabilities to be present in all our State Signatories.

That is why our National Data Centres for All initiative is a high priority. It helps small states build the serious scientific capability they need to take in CTBTO data and use it for various civil and scientific purposes. Enthusiastic uptake!

This strengthens the case that this Treaty really is for ALL states, not just for wealthier states with more technical and strategic weight.

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Yes! The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is for ALL states. It's verification system is credible and respected. It works. It's fair.

This success is all the more impressive, as the Treaty hasn't yet entered into force.

Why? Because under the Treaty's Annex 2, 44 named states have to ratify the Treaty. Nine still need to do so.

Momentum towards universality is increasing. States are still signing and ratifying. Nine ratifying in the past 30 months. The CTBT now has 187 signatories. 178 ratifications. A mighty international convergence of view.

Still, without entry into force we don't have the Treaty's full set of verification tools. No consultation and clarification procedures. No confidence-building mechanisms.

Above all, no On-Site Inspections, or OSIs.

Why does that matter? Imagine this scenario.

This very evening our systems detect what looks like a nuclear explosion. We can determine in which State it happened. We're close to certain that this explosion was a nuclear test. We alert our state signatories accordingly.

However, the state concerned flatly denies that that explosion was a nuclear test. Then what? Tensions grow. Recriminations fly. New uncertainty for international security.

If the Treaty were in force, we'd have the option of an On-Site Inspection. An OSI.

A team of CTBTO trained, international inspectors would have the legal mandate to travel to the suspected explosion site. With over 100 tonnes of equipment. Serious excess baggage charges!

The CTBTO could advise the world with certainty:

Yes, a nuclear explosion has taken place at this site

Or No, nothing illicit under the Treaty has happened.

In short, without entry into force the Treaty CAN'T do ALL that it was intended to do.

And yet, we continue to work on developing our OSI capabilities. We've just completed a major field exercise in Hungary. Part of our preparation for a full exercise in Sri Lanka next year. To test our people, procedures and equipment.

When entry into force happens, we'll be ready.

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Testing times. Bold choices.

That earlier era of nuclear testing was appalling. Unacceptable.

The current period with only a handful of tests this century is a vast political and moral improvement.

If a significant nuclear weapon possessor state was to return to nuclear testing, the CTBT would be at risk, even the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. A far wider and reckless nuclear arms race could ensue.

Would we all have the restraint—or the good luck—to avoid a nuclear war?

That's the nightmare scenario.

Another possibility? We chug along as we are.

The CTBT remains not in force, but few if any nuclear tests actually happen as a result of the powerful global norm against testing.

By far the best option: the nations of the world unite and make a bold choice:

To agree that nuclear weapon testing stops. Once and for all. The CTBT enters into force!

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In that first John Gee Memorial Lecture, Gareth Evans quoted a Russian diplomat, Mikhail Berdennikov, talking in 2007 of John's contribution:

"Today almost one-third of the world's chemical weapons and two-

thirds of its production capacity have been destroyed.

Much of the credit for these truly historic accomplishments, without exaggeration, goes to John Gee. Few can claim such a legacy."

Few indeed.

But how to emulate that success? How to set in motion the verifiable end of all the thousands of nuclear weapons still in existence today? That's our challenge.

Such a world requires a powerful and verifiable ban on nuclear testing—the CTBT.

War in Ukraine. Dangerous tensions across the Middle East. Unease in your own Indo-Pacific region, as so-called 'strategic competition' intensifies.

There's media reporting of heightened activity at former nuclear test sites. Discussion and even threats of the possible use of nuclear weapons are back, like we hoped they never would be.

When you're as close to all this as I am, you feel both more pessimistic and more optimistic.

What are the current prospects for those bold choices? Not good in the short-term—without a disaster!

Do we give up? Absolutely no way!

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In that 2007 Lecture, Gareth Evans also said:

"John Gee communicated his arguments in a quiet and persistent way. He impressed with his command of the issues and his integrity, and in a way which was enormously effective in getting results."

There's no better way to sum up how to make progress in multilateralism. And how smart Australian diplomacy makes its own special contribution.

In global diplomacy, Australian's are seen as honest and direct. Our what-you-see-is-what-you-get-and-no-messing-about approach is powerful and attractive.

But that's not enough. Here's what I've learned.

Today's multilateralism requires formidable patience. Patience (and some guile!) in pursuing suggestions. Patience in building relationships that help you do that.

Careful respectful listening. Bringing in other voices, while somehow keeping the whole process focused on the goal and edging forward.

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Australians bring something powerful to these debates.

There's a fascinating book by Rebecca Johnson:

Unfinished Business: The Negotiation of the CTBT and the End of Nuclear Testing

The book drills deep into the negotiating history of the CTBT. It describes how Australian diplomats were right there, at the heart of the negotiations. Lobbying and drafting. Suggesting and proposing. Persuading and pushing.

Australian's helped get this remarkable Treaty agreed. And we're right there today, pushing tenaciously to implement it, protect it and see it enter into force.

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The CTBT is at the heart of global security. We need it now. We will continue to need it in the future. Even if we think there are no more nuclear weapons, we'll still need the IMS to guarantee that anyone breaking the rules is immediately found out!

We Australians have had nuclear weapons tests on our territory. Now we help the world make the right bold choice.

Never again here. Never again anywhere else!

Thank you.

WINNER: AWARD ACCEPTANCE

"We Must Go All In for Freedom!"

By Neringa Bliūdžiūtė for Margarita Šešelgytė,
Director, Institute for International Relations and Political Science

Delivered at the award ceremony of the Council of Konstanz, Germany, Nov. 5, 2024

Vielen Dank, Thank you
I'm truly thankful and honoured to be here and receive the award.

An award is also an opportunity to take the microphone and to give the voice to the causes we believe deserve greater attention.

Imagine living in shady neighbourhood—with gangsters, violence and fear. Whom would you turn to for advice to understand what is happening and how to restore law&order?

Most likely these will be your immediate neighbours and not those from far away cities, not experiencing the same challenges as you.

Why am I talking about this?

I have spent my childhood in the Soviet Republic of Lithuania, which was an occupied by the Soviet Union.

The fear to speak our own language, to share our history, to celebrate our national days; the loss of land and property—these were the struggles that we were facing every day.

My grandfather hid Lithuania's history book in the drawer, my father couldn't celebrate own birthday as it coincided with Lithuania's Independence day, February 16. Our family, all families couldn't gather around Christmas table, as it was forbidden.

We lived in the gangster's neighbourhood. Silenced and threatened.

I was lucky to see this gangster, the Soviet Union, disappear. Or so I thought then, in the 90ies. When Lithuanians stood firm and fought for freedom. For the right to live in a democracy. For the right to use own language, own history, own land. My all family was at the TV tower on the January 13, the bloody Sunday when Lithuanians were crashed by tanks, shot. Civilians. But we won.

30 years of freedom allowed us to have a timid belief that this time it might be forever. But we were always cautious.

A few years ago, this imperial gangster resurfaced in the European neighbourhood. And we know what is to be expected: not out of fear, but out of a deep awareness.

We know how this gangster operates and what it seeks: it is chaos and destruction, blood and darkness. We choose awareness and preparedness because these are the only means of survival.

Old habits die hard, especially when they are unchecked. It is up to us to set firm boundaries, to stand resolute, and to insist on a future built on peace and dignity.

This time, Europe stands firm. The West stands united. And as immediate neighbours, we feel that our story and our perspective are finally being heard.

Yet, while our understanding of the situation has been acknowledged, the vision, what to do next, how to deal with the gangster, how to restore rule of law is still questioned.

I came here directly from the United States, Stanford University, were I have my fellowship. In the US the words "freedom is not free" are engraved in stone, a powerful reminder of the costs that freedom demands.

Yet, I sense that we sometimes respond with the illusion that perhaps we can avoid paying that price—that maybe, this time, we can find a less costly way, or that perhaps there is an alternative.

Even if we acknowledge that a new Iron Curtain has fallen, there is still a quiet hope that perhaps we might soon open a few channels through it, or hold back some of our resources for later—just maybe.

Meanwhile, this aggressor goes all-in—without restraint, without hesitation, it does not save, it does not count recources.

And deep down, we know our only choice is to stand firm, to help Ukraine resist this empire of darkness with our full commitment. There can be no reservations, no misplaced hopes, no illusions.

And yes, there is a price to pay. But freedom is not free and we cannot afford any illusions about the nature of this gangster.

Let's give Europe what it does deserve. As in the words of G. Bush Senior spoken here in Germany in the early nineties—make it whole and free.

With whole and free Ukraine in it. That is the key to our freedom.

WINNER: COMMEMORATIVE SPEECH

"Swimming Into Oblivion"

By Tobias Kwakkelstein for Hester van Buren,
Deputy Mayor, Amsterdam

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Delivered at Olympic Stadium,
Amsterdam, May 4, 2024

Good afternoon,

It's wonderful to see you all here, once again gathered at the foot of the statue of Prometheus, to commemorate the men and women of the Dutch sports world who perished in the Second World War. Prometheus, as you know, stole fire from the gods and gave it to humanity. This fire brought progress and civilization to mankind, but Prometheus himself had to make a tremendous sacrifice for it.

This yearly commemoration is dedicated to the athletes, and this year in particular to the swimming athletes, who were murdered during the war. But please allow me take this opportunity to also pay tribute to a man who wasn't particularly athletic himself, but was indispensable to Amsterdam's sports culture, until he too was murdered. He is one of my great examples, and I stand on his shoulders. The man who brought progress and civilization to our city. Not by giving us fire, but water...

I am speaking of alderman Monne de Miranda, the 'son of Mokum '. "If you want to bathe, if you want to swim, you must vote for De Miranda", was his campaign slogan. And he kept his word. In 1932, he gave us the Amstelparkbad, the swimming pool that would later be named after him. On the plaque still visible at the entrance of the De Mirandabad, he is called a 'fighter for public welfare', and quite rightly so. De Miranda saw municipal politics as a testing ground to improve people's lives. Being close to the people, the government could truly make a difference. Most importantly, it could be a 'shield for the weak,' as it was called in those days.

De Miranda moved mountains for Amsterdam's workers. He lowered the price of potatoes, initiated large employment projects like the creation of the Amsterdam Forest and ordered the construction of new residential areas in the south and west of the city. De Miranda himself grew up in deep poverty. He knew all about cramped houses, laundry hanging to dry in the living room, and men who preferred the pub over going home. There was a need for washhouses and bathhouses, bathrooms in new homes, and public swimming pools. De Miranda made sure they were built, and the swimming pools were an immediate success: swimming became a very popular sport in the 1930s...

"Father was a man with strong ideals," says De Miranda's son, "and he had the perseverance to realize them." With his drive, temperament, and wit, the small man with his 'sharp eyes' was praised by many. But with his street-fighter mentality, impatience, and directness, he also made enemies... There were many complaints about "that clever little Jew," as they sometimes called him. Newspaper De Telegraaf falsely accused him of corruption in the allocation of building plots, and the tone became increasingly antisemitic. In 1935, a group of fascists shot at his house. Even more painful was that more and more members of his own political party abandoned him. After the Germans occupied the Netherlands, De Miranda was, of course, not willing to cooperate. The Jewish Council asked him to encourage the 'February strikers' to return to work, but he refused. With his authority and sharp tongue, he was a thorn in the side of the occupiers.

On July 18, 1942, he was arrested, and later that year, he was taken to Camp Amersfoort. There, he was humiliated and abused. Not by the Germans, nor by Dutch collaborators, but mainly by resistance fighter Teun van Es and his communist comrades. After ten days of forced labor and torture, Monne de Miranda died on November 3, 1942. It was the tragic end of the 'Son of Mokum': the man who had done so much for the city, especially for those who were less fortunate...

Ladies and gentlemen,

According to Jewish tradition, a person dies twice. The first time is when they stop breathing, the second time is when they are forgotten. That is why on May 4th, we tell the stories of those who died and mention their names. Heroes like Monne de Miranda, and all those other, lesser-known compatriots. Here at the statue of Prometheus, we commemorate the athletes who lost their lives. But for many of them, mentioning their names is not so simple…

When the Germans invaded our country, sports clubs with many Jewish members sensed what was coming. Like the Amsterdam swimming club De Watervrienden, where the membership records were immediately shredded. It helped little. 200 Jewish members of De Watervrienden did not survive the war. And by destroying the records, it became difficult to find out who they were. We have some photos, which provide an impressive snapshot of the vibrant swimming culture of the '20s and '30s, but we don't know who we are looking at. They are unknowns, with slowly yellowing faces, swimming into oblivion...

Fortunately, researchers are still able to gather information about these people: their names, how they lived their lives, and how they met their end. So that we can get to know them, and will never forget them...

Even eighty years later, the Second World War continues to concern us

and fascinate us. The war remains a moral benchmark. A beacon that guides us in turbulent, tense times.

Especially now, as we watch with dismay how antisemitism, polarization, and intolerance are increasing.

Especially now, we must mention the names of those who were murdered, tell their stories, and remember them in silence and dignity.

Especially now, we must commit ourselves to progress and civilization.

As Monne de Miranda did when he gave us water.

And as Prometheus did when he gave us fire.

WINNER: COMMENCEMENT/CONVOCATION ADDRESS

"The Physician's Voice"

By Joel Hood for Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD,
Immediate President, American Medical Association

//

Delivered at Harvard University,
Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 15, 2024

Good morning and thank you Dr. Saldaña and Dr. Corwin and the entire Harvard Class of 1958 for helping make this such a special day. It's an honor to have been invited to speak with you, and to return to a place where I have so many fond memories.

Harvard is a special place for me—as it is for anyone lucky enough to enter its doors. I've been both a student and a teacher at Harvard, and I've always appreciated having a forum to discuss and debate difficult issues—not unlike the challenges we face today that stir so much emotion in so many.

To those of you this morning who are using the opportunity of my visit to express your feelings about the violence and humanitarian crisis in the Middle East at this moment, I want you to know that I see you and I share your intense feelings of sadness and loss.

The AMA last fall expressed its shock and horror about what was unfolding in Israel and Gaza, and we called for medical neutrality to allow physicians and health care personnel on the ground to carry out their life-saving work. And, as always in times of global conflict, we strongly support efforts to deliver aid and medical supplies to those in crisis.

I know this position doesn't go as far as some would like, and I respect not only your feelings on this issue but your First Amendment right to make your voices heard in a respectful and peaceful manner.

In fact, my remarks this morning will talk about why it's important for physicians and those aspiring to join our profession to raise our collective voice on issues that matter to us and our patients.

So, thank you.

(pause)

Today is a day of ceremony and celebration as we honor the past—all the hard work that has brought you to this moment—and a future that is complex, uncertain, yet filled with unlimited opportunities.

The fact that you're all holding personal letters written to you from your younger selves adds another layer of emotion to this transition from medical school to residency—the ending of one phase of this incredible journey and the beginning of another.

I realize I'm the only thing standing between you and those envelopes that you've probably dreamt about since you started medical school, and so I promise not to drone on with a bunch of pointless stories about my journey in medicine.

This is your day … and your moment. And no matter what happens over the next couple of hours, I assure you it's a day you will never forget.

Twenty years ago, I made the exact same transition you are making from medical school to residency—excited and quietly terrified for what would happen next.

Had I made a huge mistake? Was I about to be rejected by my top choices? What if I don't match at all?

I probably had that same deer-in-headlights look that this gentleman in the fourth row has.

Me? A doctor? It didn't seem possible.

But I had worked too hard and spent far too much on tuition to turn back. I had no choice but to rip open that envelope and see what life had in store for me.

So, let me be the first to tell you—you're going to be fine.

No matter where your journey takes you from this moment forward, it's going to be ok.

You're going to end up—like I did—exactly where you were always meant to be.

This isn't the end of your journey, it's just the next step. And trust me, there are a lot of steps ahead of you.

(pause)

And so, my message to all of you today is a simple one … thank you.

Thank you for choosing medicine.

Thank you for choosing science.

Thank you for choosing to spread compassion and empathy in a world increasingly divided by anger and mistrust.

Thank you for recognizing the incredible public health challenges

we face—racial and gender injustices, income inequality, chronic disease, viral outbreaks, drug overdose, gun violence—and saying to yourself, "I've got this."

Thank you for not only hoping for a better world, but for digging in, rolling up your sleeves, and promising to give everything you've got to make it a better world.

(pause)

The truth is being a physician today is not easy. It's very difficult work—even when everything goes right.

And the health care environment you'll soon be entering is quite different than when I began my professional career. Twenty years may not be much time in many professions, but it's a lifetime in medicine.

The technology is different. The demands on your time are different. The hoops you have to jump through to provide compassionate care are different.

And this moment is particularly challenging, with global health crises mounting, with political acrimony sowing distrust in medicine and scientific institutions. Society itself feels fragile and unprotected in ways that are unfamiliar to us.

There is a weight to our chosen profession that will feel unbearable at times. This is true for all noble pursuits.

A doctor ages in dog years … although I must say Dr. Corwin and Dr. Saldaña both look great, so maybe it's just me.

Anyway, when it's your turn, I know that each and every one of you will be ready.

You will lean on your training. You will lean on your experiences at this incredible institution.

And you will lean on one another, your friends and classmates, who will show the same battle scars as you.

(pause)

I am not one who thinks people are born to be doctors. Some people think that way, but I never have.

I believe doctors are made by long nights and even longer days. Doctors are made by intense study and a bottomless curiosity. Why did it happen that way? What's causing that? Why is this different than before?

Although we are problem-solvers by nature, being a good doctor isn't about having all the answers.

Science and medicine are constantly evolving as we learn more, do more, and understand more.

A good doctor listens. She asks questions with an open mind. He counsels patients about all of their health options … and through honest and open dialog, empowers them to make decisions about their health that are right for them.

This sounds easy when you say it out loud, but it is incredibly challenging and complex.

And every so often something dramatic happens—like, I don't know, the U.S. Supreme Court overturns 50 years of settled law and makes it possible for politicians to insert themselves between a patient and physician about the reproductive care they receive.

A ruling strips away rights from patients … removes the most intimate decisions about their health and family planning from them … and, almost overnight, criminalizes the care you provide.

It sounds unbelievable, but these things are very real.

And if it makes you angry, you're not alone. In fact, there is an entire community of doctors right here in Massachusetts and across the country speaking out on issues like these and elevating the concerns of their patients to decision-makers in their state and the nation's capital.

(pause)

For better or worse, we are living in a time of labels and identities—both inclusive and exclusive.

Identities are inclusive when they bring people in and provide a window of your true self. But they can be exclusive when people immediately assign meaning to your identity that may be unfair.

I am a father. I am a physician. I am a physician advocate and president of a legacy organization. I am a gay man. I am a veteran. I am Jewish.

These are the identities that make me who I am—identities I share proudly. But when society is fractured as it is right now … when every expression of self invites scrutiny and criticism … it's sometimes difficult to be who you truly are.

It becomes challenging to speak your mind in the way a leader must.

(pause)

Make no mistake: A doctor's voice is a powerful voice. So, use it.

(pause)

I sometimes tell the story of my first introduction to the American Medical Association, as a medical student in Chicago, walking into a downtown hotel to watch the proceedings of the AMA House of Delegates. This was in 2001, and I had just finished my first year of medical school at the University of Chicago.

As I stood at the back of the room, watching physician delegates from every corner of the country discuss and debate health policy, I was struck by two competing feelings. On the one hand, I was in awe of the deliberative process and how physicians from every state and specialty shaped these debates with their personal experiences and expertise.

But another feeling settled in as well—an unshakable feeling of insecurity, knowing that as a gay man in medicine I was an outsider who might never be accepted for who I was.

The policy debates I heard were jarring to me. To hear the arguments against inclusivity… to hear arguments that flew in the face of science because of homophobia and ignorance. I knew who I was, but I wasn't sure there would ever be a place for me in the AMA.

You have to remember that in 2001, there were no federal hate crime protections for LGBTQ people. Same-sex marriage was not legal in any state. Don't Ask Don't Tell was still the law of the land—and it would remain so when I was commissioned as an officer in the Navy some years later.

In 1998, a young college student named Matthew Shepard was brutally murdered in Wyoming because of his sexual orientation. Matthew and I were the same age. I had only recently told my closest friends in college that I was gay. And for me, as for many of us in this community, Matthew's murder was as shocking as it was predictable. It was a salient reminder of the very real threats that people like me face every day when we live as our authentic selves.

At that time, the AMA, which would go on to become such an important part of my professional life, did not have an LGBTQ Advisory Committee. There were no policy discussions that focused on the health needs of my community.

And there were few openly gay physicians to look up to. In fact, the AMA had only amended its policies eight years earlier to specifically prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation—and had only outright opposed the practice of conversion therapy, one year before I joined the organization.

And so, as a medical student—standing in that room and watching the House of Delegates process unfold—I had well founded fears about my place in society, never mind the profession of medicine.

A few years later, I became active in my state medical society during my residency in Boston—not far from here—and I helped to write and pass a resolution to form an LGBTQ committee to elevate the concerns of our community, not only as patients but as physicians and health care professionals.

It was an effort that clearly did not sit well with everyone. As this effort was unfolding, I was pulled aside by a colleague and told that while creating an LGBTQ committee was all fine and good, continuing on this path would bring a swift end to my career in organized medicine.

I realized at that moment that my choices were to continue to hide who I am, or to help organized medicine evolve into a place that welcomed people like me.

Taking the oath to become AMA president last summer—surrounded by those I loved, my family, and so many leaders who inspired me and mentored me over the years—was proof that the AMA and legacy organizations like ours could evolve. That many had evolved.

This is why visibility matters. Representation matters.

Identities you show the world matter.

When you arrive at a place of leadership in your profession—any profession—I believe you have a responsibility and a privilege to use for your voice for good … to try and lift up those who haven't yet found their voice. Or those whose voices have been silenced.

This is why I have been an outspoken advocate for LGBTQ health issues since my earliest days in medicine—work that I believe we, as physicians, are called to do by our Code of Medical Ethics, which instructs us to always provide "competent medical care, with compassion and respect for human dignity and rights."

Years later, after joining the Navy as a reservist and finding myself as a medical officer at a military base in Afghanistan, when I had the opportunity to speak out on an injustice in the U.S. military, I took it.

I met a transgender man, a fellow American soldier, who was tasked with some of the most dangerous work we encountered in the region—a minesweeper across treacherous terrain. Because of the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy at the time, the soldier's true identity was hidden from most in his unit.

One day we received a special visitor at base, the newly appointed U.S. Secretary of Defense, Ash Carter. After sneaking into a troop town hall, and in front of reporters from a dozen national news outlets, I summed the courage to ask the secretary his position on transgender soldiers serving in the military—a question I knew my friend couldn't ask without outing himself and ending his deployment.

The secretary responded: "I don't think anything but their suitability for service should preclude them from serving."

And although it wasn't official policy, the Obama administration applauded the secretary's response—changing the trajectory of my career as a physician and as an advocate for equal rights and marriage equality.

In the years that followed, I have been asked to share my insights on this issue with the Pentagon, with the White House … I've testified before Congress alongside transgender servicemembers, and I continued to speak with journalists at every opportunity.

I wouldn't call myself an unwitting advocate, but the power of my voice—of speaking up—in that moment surprised even me.

(pause)

What I've come to realize in the years since is that everyone who pursues medicine is an advocate in his or her own way. We might not always recognize it. But we are.

That's because each of us has a commitment to a set of beliefs in this world that we care deeply about.

So, let me ask you: What do you care about?

Whose cause will you fight for?

Discovering those answers is among the most important things you will ever do in medicine—and in life.

(pause)

Most people I know who become physicians or health care professionals do so because they want to help people.

They are driven to provide compassionate care that makes a real difference in the lives of others, and find that doing so is tremendously rewarding and personally fulfilling.

They help people in small ways—like when a teenager comes out to their family and needs guidance and support, or a mother is diagnosed with a rare condition but in time for a full course of treatment and full recovery.

And they help people in very big ways—such as leaders in organized medicine who are fighting to eliminate the tremendous burdens that physicians today face … or address health inequities … or provide guidance—and raise

some concerns—about the emerging world of AI in health care.

These are enormous challenges that take more than leadership—they take a sincere belief in your own voice. In your ability to make a difference.

(pause)

As you embark on your residencies, remember that you are now in a place of privilege, and positioned to use your voices for your patients, your communities, and your colleagues.

How will you use it?

What are the issues that matter the most to you?

Advocating for reproductive health? Eliminating bias from the exam room? Banning assault weapons? Making it tougher for children and teens to buy e-cigarettes?

Unburdening physicians from excessive busy work? Expanding access to medical coverage? Increasing funding for public health programs?

Influencing determinants of health? Improving health technologies? Addressing climate change?

Our world is growing more complicated by the day.

Just as important is how will you use your voice.

Will you use it in a manner that is respectful of others? Will you conduct yourself with intellectual honesty, with respect and the stature of your profession?

If those words sound familiar to you, they should … they're taken from Harvard's own Rights and Responsibilities, the same language I embraced years ago as a Harvard student and faculty member.

Honesty. Civility. Integrity. Respect. Words that are thrown around a lot these days without many pausing to consider the meaning behind them.

Am I being respectful of myself and others?

Am I being intellectually honest in my argument?

Is my conduct civil or just an attempt to shut down opposing points of view?

As our world becomes more contested, more hyper-partisan—fueled by mistrust and anger—the weight of these words take on increasing importance.

How you use your voice is as crucial as what you say.

(pause)

I promise that whatever issues matter to you also matter to a lot of your colleagues in medicine. And that when you're ready, you'll find an ally in your corner to help you speak your truth.

It may be a friend. A confidant. A faculty member. It may be your county or state medical association.

It may even be the AMA, and I don't mind making that shameless plug because despite all the challenges I've talked about, being president of this 176-year-old institution has been the most rewarding and humbling opportunity of my professional life.

It has strengthened my resolve to use my voice—and encourage others to do the same.

I mention the AMA because organized medicine—at the local, state or national level—reflects the issues that most matter to physicians at any moment in time. The AMA has led national health campaigns to reduce public smoking, champion childhood vaccinations, and helped make seat belts standard in all American automobiles.

These days we're fighting medical misinformation around science and vaccines, working to remove barriers to care, improve medical training and education, reverse the rise in chronic disease, and improve physician well-being on a broad scale.

And twice a year, doctors from every specialty and every corner of the country—including medical students and residents—gather to tell us what to pursue next. What challenges to take on. What injustices to fight.

What do you want the profession to look like in 10 years? In 20 years?

It may sound silly, but I still remember holding the application to join the AMA as a first-year medical student. It was September 2000, and I recall crossing 55th street near campus to drop the paper application into the mail.

It felt meaningful, pivotal. "This is how I enter the profession," I thought. This was the moment when the wider world of medicine opened for me.

But that's my journey in medicine. That's my story.

Each of you here today has the opportunity to write your own story in medicine … to follow your passions … and to pursue the causes that matter to you.

Thank you for choosing medicine.

Thank you for choosing humanity and healing.

Welcome to the next step in your journey.

Now let's get to work.

WINNER: DEDICATION/GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY SPEECH

"Kickstarting a New Campus"

By Dawn Blaus for Larry Rosia,
President/CEO, Saskatchewan Polytechnic

//

Delivered at the naming/dedication ceremony for the new Saskatchewan Polytechnic campus, Saskatoon, April 12, 2024

1. Good morning.

2. Tawaw, háu koda, anin sikwa, tanshi, and edlanet'e. I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered on Treaty 6 Territory, the ancestral lands of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Dakota, Lakota and Nakoda peoples, and the traditional homeland of the Métis. Thank you, Elder Rick, for starting things in a good way this morning.

3. [Acknowledge Premier Moe, Minister Wyant. Acknowledge members of the Remai family. Mention Board members and Campaign Cabinet members in attendance.]

4. I am delighted to be here and so glad that you all have joined us. Today is a momentous day for Saskatchewan Polytechnic. For the second time in just under a month, we have a major announcement about the Time to Rise capital campaign for our new Saskatchewan Polytechnic Saskatoon campus.

5. While this donation is a truly remarkable investment in Saskatchewan Polytechnic … and an incredible endorsement of the skills training and applied learning that we are known for … I'm going to make you wait just a bit to hear the big news.

6. First, I'd like to say a few words about an extraordinary local family and their inspirational patriarch, whose generosity of spirit and philanthropic vision made today, and more importantly—so many tomorrows—possible.

7. The Remai name is a familiar one in this province. The family has made their home here for four generations, arriving in the Carrot River area almost a century ago from Hungary. Starting a farm on the Prairies during the 1930s was no easy feat for the large family, but they persevered. Everyone pitched in.

8. As the second youngest in the family, Joseph Remai—Joe—developed his work ethic early. I'm told that his job on the farm was to milk the family's three cows twice a day … every day … seven days a week. Those early lessons in hard work, consistency, and perseverance clearly paid off.

9. Following in the footsteps of his two brothers, Joe went into the construction industry after graduating with an Engineering degree from the University of Saskatchewan. He was in the construction business for 65 years, working as a general contractor in the early years, and then branching out to build apartments, schools, and hospitals all around the province.

10. While the Remai name has been prominent in the Saskatchewan construction and property management/real estate development sectors for decades, more recently the name has become synonymous with philanthropy and patronage … with support for education, health care, and the arts. With making life better for Saskatchewan people.

11. Because along with that solid work ethic and drive to succeed, Joe Remai inherited a strong sense of community and the importance of giving back to the community.

12. He established the Joseph Alfred Remai Family Foundation in 2012. As its website notes, the Foundation supports institutions and organizations working to improve the well-being of members of the community. Since its inception, it has provided more than $12 million to a variety of Saskatchewan organizations and projects, including money to each of Saskatoon's hospital foundations, and funding to start Canada's Centre for Pandemic Research at VIDO, and, of course … a $5 million gift to Saskatchewan Polytechnic in 2019.

13. We've known Joe as a supporter and friend of Saskatchewan Polytechnic for many years. Our Joseph A. Remai School of Construction bears his name as an acknowledgement of the major $5 million dollar donation he made five years ago—the largest in our history at the time.

14. So in some ways, it seems a bit like déjà vu being here today to announce a donation from Joe Remai. Still, I think what I'm about to share will be a game-changer, a tipping point that sets our Time to Rise capital campaign for the new Saskatoon campus on the road to a championship season.

15. Today, on behalf of Saskatchewan Polytechnic, its Board of Directors, and its staff, I am so very pleased to announce a 25 million dollar gift from the Joseph Alfred Remai Family Foundation to the Time to Rise campaign. This incredible gift is by far the largest in our Saskatchewan Polytechnic history—and one of the largest in our province ever. [PAUSE FOR APPLAUSE—encourage/lead it if necessary.]

16. Yes—isn't that incredible?

17. We've put together a video to shine a light on a man who gives so selflessly, the family that shares so generously.

18. Let's watch it together. Please play the video.

19. [When video finishes, note what a powerful/emotional/fantastic story it told about a great man and lead the applause for Joe.]

[PAUSE]

20. Today's gift propels Sask Polytech into a new era. The new campus is a rare opportunity to create a 21st-century, modern learning environment that will inspire innovation, collaboration, and inclusiveness, expand

opportunities for students, and supply the expert workforce for current and emerging industries in Saskatchewan.

21. Our visionary collaboration with the University of Saskatchewan and Innovation Place will connect business, industry, and learners in an Innovation Corridor to share knowledge, to collaborate, and to develop new innovations—supported by Sask Polytech's applied research infrastructure and subject matter experts. [Mention that you're not aware of this anywhere else in Canada/North America.]

22. The potential and possibilities seem almost limitless right now as we begin to put plans to paper.

23. Today's donation reinforces that potential and begins to make real the possibilities. We are not just constructing a new Sask Polytech campus, we are empowering and inspiring tomorrow's leaders.

24. In recognition of this historic gift that has such a significant impact for future generations of students, it gives me immense pleasure to announce that our new campus will become the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Joseph A. Remai Saskatoon Campus.

25. Barry, Minister Wyant, William and Mitch, can I ask you to join me on stage for the unveiling.

[Unveil new campus name and pose/pause for photos and applause.]

26. [Speak directly to the Remai family] Thank you again to Joe Remai, and to his wonderful family members who have joined us here today. Your legacy will carry forward, and generations of students to come will benefit from your generosity and vision for the future.

27. [Return attention to the main audience.] This investment is an investment in students, in learning, and in the future of our province. It's an investment from the heart, with a return that will be counted in good jobs, thriving families, and economic prosperity for our province.

28. As we move forward with our planning and preparations for the Joseph A. Remai Saskatoon Campus, donor and community support continues to be vital. I invite each of you here today to consider how you might support and show your confidence in Sask Polytech, our students, and our province.

29. I promise you—there's never been a better Time to Rise!

WINNER: EMPLOYEE MEETING

"Do You Want to Be a Legend?"

By Tom Smithyman for Ajei Gopal, President and CEO, Ansys

//

Delivered in Orlando, Florida, Jan. 16, 2024

The condition is called single ventricle heart disease. And if that sounds terrifying, it's meant to.

Nine-year-old Allie was born with single ventricle heart disease, and in her case, all of her blood flow went to her right lung. Her left lung was not getting enough oxygen. By the time her doctors diagnosed the severity of her condition, they realized she had only one year left to live.

Now just think about that for a minute. A 9-year-old girl. She was only just beginning to realize the wonders of life. Now imagine being Allie's parents. Imagine the anguish they must have felt. That feeling of despair. Of helplessness.

And yet…they weren't helpless at all—thanks to the ingenuity of a cardiac surgeon, the resources of a major medical center, and the power of Ansys simulation.

Dr. David Hoganson of Boston Children's Hospital analyzed and modeled Allie's cardiovascular system using Fluent, and then he performed VIRTUAL surgery on a digital twin of the girl's organs to help him gain insights before the physical surgery ever began.

The standard approach for addressing this problem was placing a certain kind of shunt in the patient. But during the simulated surgery, Ansys showed the medical team that that standard technique would not help Allie. It would fail. In other words, the normal approach would have led to a catastrophic outcome for Allie and for her parents.

Because of the insights garnered from simulation, Dr. Hoganson and his team chose a non-standard method. And this approach led to unprecedented success. Allie is fully recovered and is no longer in any danger.

Allie now leads a full life. That means dozens more birthdays. Decades of laughter. A lifetime of hopes and aspirations and dreams. All thanks to the ingenuity of Dr. Hoganson and his team at Boston Children's Hospital and...our… amazing…technology.

What's more, this was not a one-time phenomenon. Since Allie's initial procedure, Dr. Hoganson has repeated the procedure over 360 times on other patients. Now think about all of the hopes and dreams of those other children and their families. Think of everything that those young people will bring into our world.

Allie's story is an example of how simulation can change a single life. Yet simulation can operate on a massive scale as well. Yes, it can save the life of an individual, but it also has the potential to save our entire planet.

Sixty-six million years ago, a 15-kilometer-wide asteroid smashed into the Earth and killed 75 percent of the animals on the planet, including the dinosaurs. Scientists, as well as Hollywood filmmakers, have been concerned about a similar impact in our future. And those scientists are now using Ansys simulation to save that future.

You might remember NASA's DART mission, which smashed an unmanned spacecraft into an asteroid to alter its orbit. The Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab extensively used Ansys STK throughout the mission-planning process, from formulating DART's trajectory through the asteroid system as well as to visualize relevant vectors and attitudes. The thermal team used STK's full-mission environment when checking the location of the sun relative to the satellite during critical maneuvers.

And in the end, NASA was able to hit a perfect bullseye on the asteroid while traveling over 14,000 miles per hour—6.8 million miles from Earth. The DART mission exceeded NASA's highest expectations by shortening the asteroid's orbit by 32 minutes. That marked the first time that humanity changed the orbit of a celestial object—and we did it with Ansys simulation. More importantly, if the asteroid had been on a collision course with Earth, this mission would have caused it to miss our planet. In other words, simulation could literally save humanity.

Our work with DART, our work with Dr. Hoganson, is profound. It is literally life-altering. And it is legendary.

To be legendary, you must excel—and not just at something common or mundane. You must excel at something that matters—something that means a great deal. In business, legends are able to improve the future of industry-leading companies—or even of entire industries themselves. They redefine ways of doing business. They disrupt—time and time again.

IBM under TJ Watson. Apple under Steve Jobs. GE under Thomas Edison. Sony under Norio Ohga. These companies were innovation engines. They did not rest on past successes, but instead pushed themselves to be better—every…single…day. They constantly asked the question: What does it take for us to get from where we are today to where we want to be in next quarter? In the next year? In the next decade?

Like those legends, Ansys is an innovator as well. There is no technology, no business process, no tool that is greater than Ansys simulation. Ansys is truly the stuff of legends.

Now that is a bold statement. Let me back it up. Only Ansys has the deepest and broadest portfolio and the resilience to change the world. We have the power to impact an organization's top line as well as its bottom line. We are today—right now—changing entire industries. And, as we just saw, we have the power to change life as we know it on this planet—or even save just a single life.

You want to talk about legendary—that is legendary. Simulation is legendary.

That is what we are.

That is what we always will be.

And that is why Ansys is legendary.

For more than 50 years companies large and small—from the best-known brands on the planet to the most innovative startups looking to disrupt entire industries—have relied on Ansys to make their products come to life. To make those products perform better. To make them less costly. More advanced.

And yet, as exciting as our accomplishments are, as life-changing as simulation can be on the grandest and the most modest of scales, as fundamental as simulation is to innovation—we have only touched upon the potential of what our solutions can do to improve the lives of our users, their customers, and frankly all of humanity.

We like to talk about simulation in terms of what it can do for us today. We use mathematics and engineering and computer science to model physics—to accurately predict how products or processes will work in the real world. And while that is an accurate, and a scientific way of describing what we do, it is perhaps too clinical a way of looking at things. It feels inelegant. It robs us of the beauty—the real magic—of simulation.

Yes, of course we can describe the world as we know it—as it is today. But Ansys simulation can do so much more than that. It can describe, it can demonstrate, it can bring to life—the world…as we want it to be.

Now I want you to think about that for a minute. What other tool or technology or process could hope to achieve that? What other solution could pluck something from the depths of your imagination and bring it to life in front of you? To prove that it is achievable? To show you how it can be made possible?

And in the future, Ansys users won't need even be engineers. Our solutions will become so intuitive, so easy that virtually anyone can use them and benefit from them. We have an opportunity—I would say an obligation—to make this happen. Just think about how our world will benefit from more simulation. The impact on our planet and on each of us is profound.

And only Ansys simulation can achieve this. Only Ansys simulation is accurate enough, intuitive enough, powerful enough to turn dreams into reality. Only Ansys is trusted enough, with our decades of experience and thousands of customers around the world. And only you are smart and intrepid enough to make this happen.

That is what we are.

That is what we always will be.

And that is why Ansys is legendary.

Legends, of course, are not created overnight. They are not simply willed into existence or have legendary status bequeathed to them from on high. It takes thought, and preparation, and a lot of hard work. Years of it. It took half a century to get to where we are today. And we stand on the shoulders of the giants who helped us to achieve everything that Ansys has become.

John Swanson. Jim Cashman. Zoltan Cendes. John Hallquist. Bharatan Patel. Ferit Boysan. Jacques Delacour. David Cebon. And, of course, all of the developers, and

the engineers, and the salespeople, and the support staff who came before us. They have laid an incredible foundation for us to build upon. And we have a responsibility—a duty really—to build upon that legacy in our company of tomorrow so our customers can do even more with our solutions.

That is how we make our mission statement come alive. That is how we power innovation that drives human advancement. And that is how we will win.

Our mission statement is simple in its wording, yet it is profound in its scope and impact.

How many other companies could hope to accomplish what we are capable of achieving? How many truly power innovation? How many hope to have the impact that Ansys does on the world? Ansys is truly a special company.

We have a roadmap for creating the future—for making our mission statement come to life. And our Pervasive Insights strategy will help us to deliver more simulation into the hands of more users.

With Pervasive Insights, Ansys can deliver unparalleled understanding not just of a customer's product but of their entire business. It is a bold vision for the industry—one that will disrupt customers' ways of approaching what they do. Pervasive Insights challenges conventional wisdom and further demonstrates our market leadership. And that will drive even greater success for all our stakeholders in both the short and the long term.

To get there—to advance our legacy even further—requires change. And change, of course, can be difficult. But it can also be incredibly rewarding.

Look at everything we have already accomplished. Now imagine how much more we can do for our users. That's where Project Next Level comes into play.

Next Level makes our Pervasive Insights strategy real.

• When we build the next generation of cloud-native applications and solutions.

• When we take advantage of a modern, digitally enabled go-to-market model that tightly couples the customer journey with our cloud-native products.

• When we create a digital thread that runs throughout our business to enable more optimized decision-making across the company.

• And when we create a community of customers, and partners, and developers who can bring our simulation to new audiences for new use cases that we have yet to imagine.

And when we accomplish all of this, we will make simulation even more accessible for everyone.

True legends don't live in the past. They don't rest on their laurels and relive past glories. They face new challenges head on. And this is a challenging environment—both for those customers as well as for Ansys. The market is demanding more. Our customers are demanding more. And Ansys must—we will—deliver. We must anticipate customers' needs and proactively help them be legends themselves.

We expect to grow by double digits in 2024 in a market that is expanding by high single digits. To achieve that audacious goal, we must start by improving our already stellar renewal rates. Of course, our users are already incredibly loyal to Ansys, but even a small increase will have an enormous impact on our top line. We are also relying on our sales and ACE teams and channel partners to grow new business—both within existing accounts as well as with net new customers.

That, of course, leads to great simulation usage. And we know that more simulation means greater customer success. Over the course of the next few days, you will hear some amazing success stories about our users. Some of these organizations can now do what was previously unthinkable thanks to the transformative power of Ansys simulation. Our laser focus on customer success—not just a net-promoter score—but actual business success, is the key to our own success in the market.

Over the past 50 years, we have helped customers navigate fundamental transformations in their way of doing business. We have helped shepherd them through economic downturns and grow through upswings. We have shown them the path to innovation. And we will continue to guide those customers well into the future.

Our customers' success translates into business success for Ansys. Just last week, we announced that we expect to exceed the high end of guidance for our fourth quarter. With those outstanding preliminary results, we expect ACV to come in at 2-point-3 billion dollars for fiscal year 2023—which is a 13 percent increase over 2022. Congratulations—and thank you!

That is a remarkable achievement given the constantly changing landscape of economic sanctions, geopolitical conflicts, and currency fluctuations. Yet you never allowed any of those to become a distraction, much less an excuse—and for that, I am incredibly grateful.

Our success has also come despite—or perhaps because of—a lot of noise from our competition. Now many of these competitors are legends as well. Legends in their own minds.

Some of our competitors think that they can get by with simulation that is "good enough." Now why would you take an chance on "good enough," when Ansys delivers much greater certainty? Doesn't Dr. Hoganson want as much information as possible when he's preparing for surgery? Do you think NASA is willing to bet the future of the planet on what is essentially a roll of the die? Of course not. They demand accuracy. They demand certainty. They demand Ansys.

This is what we are.

This is what we always will be.

Ansys is legendary.

I've spoken about the transformation that is happening at Ansys. Just as we are no longer the same company that we were a few years ago, in a few years from now, Ansys will have transformed again. And while change

can seem difficult, we embrace it. We know that change leads to growth—both professionally and personally. So we embrace that—a future that we ourselves are shaping. And not just for us. Not just for our customers. But for entire industries. For the entire world.

And we continue to expand our reach around the world—expanding Ansys into new continents. In the last year, we established offices in South America and in Africa. These are critical locations staffed by colleagues who are developing our products and supporting our customers and making our Ansys values truly global.

Of course, having corporate values is only the start. We must back those values up with our deeds. Every day when a colleague pushes themselves to do more. Every day, when a diverse group of professionals comes together to make our company and our world a better place. Every day, when we help a customer to innovate or to achieve something previously thought impossible. Every day, when we excel, and break through boundaries, and then aim to accomplish even more. That is why we are here. And that is what makes Ansys so special.

So here is my question to you: Do you want…to be…a legend?

Do you want to be known as someone who made a difference?

Do you want to be regarded, years from now, as the best of the best?

Do you want to be talked about as someone who helped to change the course of history?

Do you want to help cure diseases? And connect disconnected people around the world. Reverse the course of climate change? Eliminate traffic accidents? Explore the cosmos?

And save lives? And maybe even… save the world.

YOU make this company great. YOU bring your best every day. YOU inspire others with your vision, your dedication, and your results.

You are legendary!

Ansys is legendary!

And WE WILL make 2024 legendary!

WINNER: FAREWELL/RESIGNATION SPEECH

"In Praise of Bryan Ward-Perkins"

Written and delivered by Neil Hallows, Editor

//

Delivered at Trinity College, Oxford, England, March 9, 2024

It's history that has brought us together tonight, but our own histories at this college tended to be rather short.

The Venerable Bede—remember him?—compared a human life to a sparrow flying throughthe mead hall. Safe and warm for that tiny fraction of eternity, but then gone, into the darkness.

That was our life as an undergraduate. We flew in, we crashed, we landed in the wine, wesearched for a mate, we crashed again, and just as we found our wings, there was a doormarked Finals and whoosh, into the darkness. Not to our death, I should add, but in all too many cases, a career in accountancy.

Actually, can I take you back to Finals just for a moment? To one particular Finals paper. A paper which tends to reward the industrious, but rains vengeance down upon the slacker. A paper I hated.

Historiography.

An unpronounceable name for an unproductive attempt to make unsustainable comparisons between unrelated historical events.

Dull ideas about the dead competing with dead ideas about the dull.

The 1993 paper was a horror. Every question beginning 'To what extent…?' but where the subtext was clear: To what extent have you ever troubled the library? To what extent have you squandered your ambitions? To what extent, my lad, are you not singing anymore?

But—one of the questions was a bit different. It was clear, it was concise, it was free of murky Marxist dialectics.

And it was this: Which historian has had the most influence over you?

My first thought was Gregory of Tours, the 6th century bishop with whom I had struck up an intimate friendship during my special subject. He begins the History of the Franks by writing:

'A great many things keep happening, some of them good, some of them bad.'

When it comes to summing up the study of history, Gregory pretty much nailed it.

Then I realised, I know this. I know a historian, and he is, by chance, neither dead nor dull. I have read his work... In fact, I have read my work to him. In tutorials, where, like Bagpuss, he would raise his wise, furry old head, fix you in a kind but compelling gaze, and tell you, gently, that everything you've been saying for the last 20 minutes was absolute bollocks.

This historian had exerted an almighty influence. Above all, he had taught me that things we now find abhorrent could, in another place, and at another time, serve a genuine purpose.

Things like blood feud... Or corduroy.

It was a dream question, but as I began to scratch out a plan, I realised

it was one that I could not possibly answer. It was just too much.

With a finals head, full of early medieval mush, swirling with three-figure dates and five-syllable names, I could not begin to do justice to those tutorials.

Where I had merely blustered and spluttered, but where he had the rare intellect to fill my head with ideas, and a grace, rarer still, to make those ideas seem like my own.

Addressing that question was going to take longer. About thirty years longer.

The historian who has influenced me the most cares about small things, because small things are anything but small in people's lives.

Take the Fall of Rome… I've always wanted to say that sentence.

So, a spoiler alert for any classicists here tonight, but the Roman Empire ended. And when I was a student, it was fashionable to present what happened next as a kind of lifestyle choice.

The Dark Ages were not dark, the argument seemed to run. They just had a very subtle form of mood lighting.

As for the people, well, it was true that they no longer had a decent roof over their heads.

But maybe they liked the pitter-patter of rain soaking them as they tried to sleep.

It was true that they no longer had coins. But who doesn't enjoy a bit of bartering, a kind of medieval Swap Shop?

Material comforts didn't matter, because this was now an exciting era of 'intellectual history', although it was also true that most people could no longer read.

This whole fancy theory had grown up around it. The Roman Empire hadn't faced a catastrophe, just a new set of circumstances and opportunities. If it sounds familiar, it's the same thing you're told when you're being fired.

This historian wrote a beautiful and elegant book about why it matters if people's lives are made vastly more miserable. We can demonstrate, through archaeology, through the size of their cows, even, that they were poorer. And it's wrong, it's always wrong, to ignore that.

I'm probably misquoting him—I've spent years doing that—but I think it matters too.

Because we all know what happens when we gloss over human suffering for the sake of a fancy theory… It's more than just the rain that falls on people's heads.

This is a historian who loves a good story, and really knows how to tell it. Holy men trudging off to the desert in search of peace, only for their followers to want a piece of them—literally. The pagan gods carved alongside Christian apostles in a medieval each-way bet on the afterlife. And an absolutely filthy story—discovered in the Vatican library, as it happens—of a Byzantine empress and a gaggle of specially trained geese.

This historian will be celebrated for years to come, not only by us, but by those who draw upon the vast works of scholarship he has led. The detailed surveys of Roman statues, and the cult of saints, available, we must hope, forever, to everyone. It's a civilised endeavour, having a scale and an intricacy that would have surely impressed the Romans.

This historian deserves his own statue, and very possibly his own cult of sainthood, although that will have to wait.

This historian… is with us tonight.

Bryan, the pandemic robbed you of your retirement dinner four years ago, but it won't deprive us of the chance to say thank you for your forty years at Trinity. You rightly warn us that any civilisation can fall… but I think we'll be alright, as long as you're around.

Fellow historians, let us give thanks to Bryan Ward-Perkins.

WINNER: INAUGURAL SPEECH

"My Life Was Changed by a Doctor"

By Nikitta Foston for Bruce Scott, MD,
President, American Medical Association

//

Delivered at the Annual Meeting,
Chicago, June 11, 2024

Good evening and thank you so much for that kind introduction, Dr. Underwood.

Thank you to my esteemed colleagues seated behind me … the exceptional men and women who have held the office of AMA president with honor and distinction … physician leaders from every state...my personal guests who have joined me on stage, each of you has played an indispensable role in my life …and to all of you… it is a privilege to speak to you tonight.

As you heard, I have attended 72 consecutive House of Delegates meetings, that's 36 inaugurations—I have to say, "This one is my favorite!"

I've witnessed amazing physician leaders, over the years, stand at this podium and take that oath.

What a rare and precious honor it is for me to stand among the remarkable leaders who've preceded me, many of whom are on this stage with me tonight.

At my first AMA meeting, Stormy Johnson was the Speaker—he became my role model and my friend. Years later, I was lucky enough to share a podium with two amazing women, Sue Bailey, and Lisa Egbert. You each helped make me a better leader… thank you.

One of those who is not on this stage tonight is Donald Palmisano. You might have noticed a chair left empty for him in the row of former presidents. Donald was my mentor when I was the young physician on the Board—he probably wondered what he did to deserve that punishment. We actually became close friends.

He called me the "Young Grasshopper"… taken from the movie, Karate Kid. I know he is here with me tonight in spirit, as he always promised he would be at my inauguration. Donald always believed, frankly even more than me…that someday I would take that oath.

He learned from his father, a beat cop in New Orleans, the advice that he shared with me and so many others, "Do your homework, have courage, never give up" …I was listening, Donald.

I also want to recognize his widow, Robin, for honoring me with her presence here tonight. Thank you, Robin.

Thank you also to my family and dear friends who have traveled to be here this evening—it means so much to share this special moment with you.

Pat, thank you for asking for God's blessing to watch over me and be with me as I embark on this journey.

I would not be here tonight without the support of the Kentucky Medical Association. I am sure it was Greg Cooper's nominating speeches that pushed me over the finish line to become the vice speaker, speaker, and now, president of the "whole dang AMA", as Greg would say.

Thank you to the Southeastern delegation, the otolaryngology section council, the Texas Medical Association, and of course the ghost caucus—you may be ghosts to some, but you will always be great friends to me.

Thank you also to my partners, past and present. I was fortunate to join two outstanding surgeons at Kentuckiana Ear, Nose & Throat after my fellowship. I am still with that practice today. I've gone from being the new guy with all the ideas to being the senior partner, a nice way of saying "the old dude."

One of my original partners, Dr. Silk, and three of my current partners, Drs. Severtson, Higgins and Miller, are here tonight. Thank you for always supporting what I do…and taking on the extra work to make it possible.

I know that I only stand here tonight because of the love and support from so many people, many gathered here, and others…here in spirit.

I am humbled and grateful.

And…I….AM…READY.

As I look out at the faces of so many fellow physicians, I am reminded of the enormity of the decision we made when we chose this profession, and our ability to change lives.

I am reminded of the passion we share for this…joy…called…medicine.

I am in awe of the trust our patients place in us…to help them … to heal them.

And I am eternally grateful for the way my life was changed by a doctor.

My brother John and I enjoyed building and flying model airplanes as kids. One Saturday afternoon when I was about 12 years old, we were working on one of those planes in the garage of our family home. We needed something from up high in the rafters, so I climbed a ladder and was reaching above my head when the ladder slipped, and I fell. I grabbed for something, anything that would stop my fall … and sure enough, what I caught was a large metal hook that held various tools.

It went straight through my hand.

There I was—in pain and in shock, bleeding down my arm. My mom heard my brother's screams and came running. Later she told me she almost fainted when she saw the hook through my hand. My parents got me to the nearest ER, hook-in-hand, with the spark plug wrench and other tools still hanging on it.

After an examination by a general surgeon, the doctor pulled my parents to the other side of the curtain separat-

ing the exam bays. You all know the curtain I'm talking about.

The doctor told my parents that I would need surgery and that I was unlikely to ever regain normal use of my hand, and I would probably lose at least two fingers.

Let me tell you, those curtains are not as soundproof as we doctors sometimes think. I heard every … single…word.

My parents were horrified…but they were not deterred.

They believed in the power of physicians to heal … and they were determined to find a doctor who could help me. They took me to Jewish Hospital, home to one of the premier hand surgery fellowship programs in the country. One of their lead surgeons, Dr. Joseph Kutz, operated on my hand that same day. He removed the hook… tools and all.

Dr. Kutz saved my hand and spared my fingers … forever changing the course of my life… and although I didn't know it at the time, putting me on the path that led to tonight. To this stage … to this incredible moment.

I am a surgeon…using this very hand…because of a doctor.

Growing up in a small house in Louisville with my parents, three sisters and two brothers…there were, shall we say, a few challenges. Not the least of which was the one bathroom we all shared.

While neither of my parents had the opportunity to go to college, they both believed that education was the pathway to success. They worked hard and sacrificed so that my siblings and I could go to the best schools, always pushing us to excel. It's in large part because of them that all of us are successful.

Thank you to each of my brothers and sisters, all here tonight, for the positive example that you set for me.

As the youngest boy in a large Catholic family—I knew there were only two professions that would make my mom most proud—doctor or priest—and I think Mom realized early on that the priest thing was not happening.

My mom is a remarkable woman—faith and family have always been at the center of her life. She hates it when I tell people her age, but at 96…she should be bragging. Still as sharp as a tack. I'll admit when I can't remember something, I call her, and she fills in all the details.

She is sitting in the front row here with us this evening.

Mom, it means the world to me that you are here tonight…thank you.

My father, even at home, was always working. He might have been repairing something around the house, tinkering in the garage, or doing yard work. And as soon as we were old enough, he involved us in his projects. He taught me that every job is important, every role has an impact—not only because of the task performed, but the standard you set while performing it.

My dad, who passed away in 2011, was our example that work didn't stop until a task was done—and done right.

In his own way, my father made a medicinal product—of course, I mean bourbon. He worked his entire life at a distillery—and yet, he never drank.

So much for, like father, like son.

But I know he's looking down and smiling tonight.

Thank you, Dad, for everything you did for our family and the values you instilled in me.

I know it's hard to believe, but I was not the most athletically inclined kid.

When teams were chosen, I was often the last one remaining. I would frequently hear, "You can have Bruce."

But I found a different way to excel—rhetoric and debate.

My trophies had little people standing behind podiums instead of holding a baseball bat or basketball.

It was said that I had the gift of gab.

My brother, John, reminded me the other day that my attempts at "rhetoric" with the neighborhood bullies often resulted in him getting in fights to protect me.

But that gift of gab earned me a debate scholarship to Vanderbilt University where I honed my power of persuasion.

The best and most life-changing thing I took away from Vanderbilt was not my degree, but the love of my life—Christy. We met as freshmen. We dated all through college and I finally convinced her to marry me after my second year of medical school—see that power of persuasion paid off!

Many of you know Christy…she is definitely my better half, my sounding board, my editor and critic, my travel agent and fashion adviser.

She is my partner in everything and my best friend. A wonderful mother to our children—Preston, Stephanie and Ian, and "Mimi" to our two beautiful granddaughters. And the best spouse anyone could ever wish for.

We celebrated our 39th anniversary last week in Nashville where we met. It sounds romantic, but I was actually there for an AMA assignment … and I convinced her to accompany me.

Thank you, Christy, for your love. I am so thankful for you…and for us.

Preston, Stephanie and Ian—you are each so unique and wonderful in your own ways; your mom and I still sometimes wonder HOW you all came from the same gene pool. You all are intelligent, hardworking, driven, and most importantly, great human beings.

As parents, we hope that our children find life partners who share their values, who love them, and make them happy. Kathryn, Kyle and Paige—the three of you are beyond what we could have hoped for. We are so blessed to have you in our family.

By the way, some of you may know that Christy grew up in Louisiana. So, I've made arrangements for a nod to her past at the end of this ceremony to get our celebration started.

So…that's how I got here. Now, let me tell you why I'm here.

I am passionate about practicing medicine. I am proud of our profession.

What physicians do every day has the incredible power to change lives for the better. I'm proof of that. But as a practicing physician, I can only impact one person at a time.

The AMA does for physicians and our patients what we as individual physicians cannot do.

At my first AMA meeting, I saw the power that physicians could have when we come together as a unified body. All these years later, I still believe the AMA can and does make a difference for our patients and our profession.

We are committed to protecting the patient-physician relationship.

Standing up for science and the ethical practice of medicine.

Pushing back against reckless scope expansions.

Fighting for fair payment that supports thriving practices.

Pressing for relief from administrative burdens—so that physicians can focus our attention on what matters most—our patients.

The AMA is the physicians' powerful ally in Congress, in state capitals, in the courtroom, the board room and the exam room.

And the policy issues we discuss and debate here….are my working reality.

I became a physician to care for patients, and we all know that's getting tougher every day.

Our health care system should help physicians provide good care, not get in the way.

Physicians are struggling with two decades of spiraling Medicare payment cuts and ever-increasing administrative burdens.

These concerns are no longer theoretical.

Almost two-thirds of physicians show signs of burnout. One-third plan to reduce their hours. One in five physicians are hoping to stop practicing or retire in the next two years. Physicians are literally closing their doors.

We can't afford to lose even one more doctor!

As a physician in an independent practice, I live these issues every day.

I see my colleagues struggling. I feel the urgency of the moment.

I will bring that urgency to my presidency.

You better believe I'm ready to fight.

Fight for you.

Fight for us.

Fight for our profession and our patients.

More than at any time I can remember, the AMA matters.

But when the battles are difficult, and victory feels out of reach, it's important to remember our why.

It's important to remember what brought us here…why we fight.

Not long ago, I was in the daily "grind" of my clinical practice, seeing patients and dealing with the typical hassles we all face. On the schedule, I saw the name of a patient I had operated on years before. I remembered Rayman distinctly—I had performed a relatively rare voice-sparing laryngeal cancer surgery on him.

Rayman was a young man when he was diagnosed, and his cute little girl would come with him to his appointments. She always looked forward to the lollipops at the front desk. He had done well after his surgery and had been cancer-free for five years of follow-up appointments. So, when I SAW his name on my schedule, I feared the worst…a late recurrence …or a new cancer.

Far from it.

Rayman greeted me with a big smile and a clear voice. He said, "I had to come to see you doc. I wanted you to know that I walked my daughter down the aisle last Saturday and I gave the toast…for all to hear...my daughter remembers you…and I will never forget you."

"You saved my life.

You saved my voice!"

Needless to say, that was a special moment, my spirits were lifted, and the "grind" of daily practice was no more. My passion for medicine was renewed.

I have been blessed to receive many kind notes from patients and words of appreciation over the years. And as much as my patients say that I have helped them, it is their words, and their gratitude, that are my greatest rewards.

This is why we fight.

They are why we fight.

When I remember the look on the face of the man, and his spouse, when I told them that the tumor was benign and we were able to save his facial nerve, anticipating a full recovery…

I am reminded of our power to heal.

When I recall the smile of the teenage boy who looked in the mirror as I removed the splint from his previously twisted nose—and he was able to breathe through it for the first time in years …

I am reminded of our power to restore.

When a woman told me that the repair of her facial fractures and scars gave her the confidence to leave an abusive relationship,…restoring not only her beauty but more importantly her dignity …

I am reminded of our power to change lives.

But most remarkable was the woman for whom I had little to offer who said, "Thank you for listening. Bless you and all the doctors for what you do."

I am reminded, in each of these moments, of our power for caring and compassion.

And…I extend my patient's gratitude to every physician here.

Years after my hand surgery, I returned to Jewish Hospital, not as a patient, but as an otolaryngologist. One day, I saw my surgeon, Dr. Kutz, in the physicians' lounge. I showed him my hand and I thanked him. He said he remembered the young boy with the hook and all the tools still attached.

After thousands of hand surgeries, I suspect he was just being nice…but it didn't matter.

He was my doctor. He changed my life.

In so many ways…he made this night possible.

Each of us is shaped by experiences in our past. But on this night—inauguration night—we look forward to the possibilities of tomorrow.

Our future…is not the one we wish for…but the one we FIGHT for—together…

We are not defined by what divides us…but what unites us.

We are bound together by our profession, and we must stand together as physicians…

I am honored to be your president . . . and to lead us into that future.

Now, let's get to work!

Thank you.

WINNER: MOTIVATIONAL SPEECH

"Just a Girl on a Train"

By Kristen Daly for
Fatoumata Balde, Student

//

Delivered at Dress for Success Boston's
Women of Impact awards, March 26, 2024

There is a saying that truly means a lot to me:

"Let your smile change the world but don't let the world change your smile"

I love to smile…

in fact if most people were to describe me…most would say I am always smiling.

For me there is no reason not to!

There is so much to be
grateful for
to be happy for
and to be excited for

The future can be intimidating but I have tried to start every day with a positive attitude and an a few acts of kindness to get me through.

(pause)

When I look at the world it is complicated…

When the world looks at me I wonder what people think?

I hope they see a kind….driven and compassionate young woman.

I try very hard to be positive and wake up with gratitude.

(pause)

But there a days when it is hard to summon a smile

There are days when… as hard as you try… you have to cry

(pause)

I had a day like that and it changed a lot for me.

(pause)

It was an ordinary day and I was riding the train with a friend.

We sat like we always do….minding our business and having silly conversation about school or friends…nothing too serious.

It was an ordinary day until a man sat next to me.

He sat too close
he stared at me too long
he when he started to speak… I knew something was wrong.

He began by calling me names… names that had to do with my skin color and my culture.

He got closer and told me how I didn't belong in this country and made fun of my hijab.

He then told me that he looked forward to shooting me and my family with a rifle.

(pause)

He kept insulting me and coming at me even though he could see the tears streaming down my face.

He kept saying horrible things even though he could tell I was just a little girl.

He kept letting me know he hated me even though he didn't know me at all.

(pause)

I ignored him as best as I could until the train came to the next stop.

My friend and I quickly got off and didn't say much to each other.

I think I was in shock…I just couldn't process any of it.

(pause)

It was that day that I learned that sometimes the world does want to change your smile….

But I didn't let that happen.

(paused)

I was raised to know my worth…to know I am loved …and to show respect even though I might be disrespected.

That day on the train when the shock wore off

I wasn't scared
I wasn't sad
I wasn't even angry at that man
I felt sorry for him.

I felt sorry that no one taught him respect…and kindness…and love.

I felt sorry for him because he must spend his days in a very dark place that is incredibly lonely.

(pause)

That day changed me …and yes it was frightening but it showed me that I am stronger than I ever thought.

(pause)

I was 12 years old that day on the train.

I think of what I would tell my 12 year old self about what is to come…

I would say to her…
You will go so far
you will feel so much love
and your smile can help to change the world.

(pause)

When I am asked about where I see myself when I grow up or what I want to do…my first response is

"I want to be president!!!"

(pause for reax)

But in the meantime and in the near future…

I simply want to make a difference each day.

I want to do good things no matter how small they might seem.

And I want to continue to use my voice to tell others that they can do the same. That they too can make an impact.

Thank you for having me here tonight and for this honor.

WINNER: STATE-OF-THE-INSTITUTION SPEECH

"A Report Card for Adults"

By Michael Cooper for Tami Silverman,
President and Chief Executive Officer, Indiana Youth Institute

Delivered at the Indiana Statehouse, Feb. 19, 2024

Good morning and thank you for joining us for the 8th Indiana State of the Child Address.

Today we are proud to be joined by a group of young people who are part of MCCOY's Youth Leaders Day at the Statehouse.

We celebrate your example, and we are committed to working with you so that you can reach your full potential.

At Indiana Youth Institute, our mission is to improve the lives of all children by strengthening and connecting the people, organizations, and communities that are focused on our youth. We do that by educating, equipping, and engaging others, and by bringing together audiences like this.

Why do we do this work? It's because there was a time not that long ago when we were children too. Do you remember your childhood?

Those were the days. Those were the days when we played with our friends, sold Girl Scout cookies, worked toward merit badges, and watched Saturday morning cartoons. Those were the days when anything seemed possible, and the world was ours for the taking.

Do you remember your childhood dreams? For some it was to play basketball for Indiana or Purdue or football for Notre Dame. For others it was to be an astronaut, a doctor, a teacher, or an Indy car driver. Some of you grew up wanting to be the Governor of Indiana. Some of you still do. We all had dreams like that.

We wanted to walk across the stage to receive a diploma or travel around the world. We wanted to buy a house and have a family. We wanted friends, hobbies, and communities that felt like home.

Now we want that for the next generation.

We're here because we want every child to have those dreams. And we want more of those dreams to come true. That's why we do this work.

It's an honor to be here in the Indiana Statehouse. This is where decisions are made about the greatest issues in our state. But whether those issues involve the economy, the environment, education, housing, or healthcare, there are children in Indiana who will be involved, and those children are our future. So, let's talk about our future.

There are over 1.5 million children living in Indiana. Our younger generations are more diverse than our adult population. And they're inheriting a world very different from the one we grew up in.

Today, Indiana's young people face challenges we couldn't have imagined when we were growing up. Their lives were disrupted by a global pandemic. Classes were moved to Zoom. Ballgames and school dances were cancelled. Opportunities to make friends and find connections were delayed. And today life is different.

They've never known a time before smartphones and social media. They can use Google and artificial intelligence to help them with their homework. But they have less privacy, and they face more peer pressure than we did. They've grown up online, and that has not been easy.

Think of what young people will experience in their lifetimes. Think of the possibilities, the dangers, and the uncertainty.They might live to see the cure for cancer, or a person walk on Mars.

That's why this conversation is so important. To prepare Indiana's young people for what comes next, we need to better understand what they're going through today.

That's the purpose of the State of the Child Address.

Every year IYI publishes our KIDS COUNT Data Book. For 30 years it's been the premier source of data and evidence on issues affecting our youth. The 2024 KIDS COUNT Data Book tells us what we're doing right and what we can improve.

Today I am proud to report that Indiana has moved up to 24th in the overall national rankings. That's up from 28th the year before.

Also noteworthy, Indiana moved up in every. single. category.

We rank 13th for Education, 16th for Economic Well-Being, 29th for Health, and 31st for Family and Community.

There's much to be encouraged by in these results. Compared to the United States, the State of Indiana has fewer children living in poverty and fewer whose parents lack secure employment.

And there's more good news. Food insecurity is down. The number of children without health insurance is down to six percent. Here in Indiana, we've also seen a lower juvenile recidivism rate, fewer children in need of services, and fewer children living in foster care.

We've also seen a historic decline of behaviors that we've long discouraged. The teen birth rate is in decline. So are the rates of underage drinking, smoking, vaping, and illicit drug use.

Our younger generations have seen the effects from our bad habits and they're learning to do better. Even more encouraging, the graduation rate is up.

In the Class of 2023, 88.9 percent of our students graduated from high school. That's the highest rate since 2016 and the third highest since we've been tracking. Let's give those results a round of applause.

These are reasons to be hopeful. They are proof that we can move the needle and that we can make a difference. That's why I can report that here in Indiana, the State of the Child is good, but not good enough.

Thanks to the dedication of people in this room, Indiana moved up to 24th in the national rankings. But 24th is still in the middle.

Here in Indiana, we want the best for our kids, and we should expect nothing less.

Take the issue of education. Indiana ranks 13th in the country but that doesn't mean we should stop there. According to the most recent evidence in the Data Book:

• 60 percent of Hoosier children ages 3 and 4 were not in school.

• 59 percent of 3rd through 8th graders were not proficient in language arts, and

• 59 percent of third through eight graders were not proficient in math.

We know that we can do better. We applaud the State of Indiana, the Indiana Department of Education, and Lilly Endowment for investing $111 million to support early literacy for Hoosier students—and the goal of ensuring that 95 percent of 3rd graders can read by 2027.

We can champion success stories while also bringing attention to areas of need.

Here in Indiana, the rate of child and teen deaths is higher than the national average, and infant mortality is on the rise.

When we break down the data by race and ethnicity, Black and multiracial infants are nearly three times as likely to die before their first birthday than white infants. It's another disparity that's overdue for change.

Here's another reality. Over 40 per percent of Hoosier grandparents are responsible for children under the age of 18. That is a significantly higher percentage than the national average.

There's also the issue of what happens after high school. Data shows that in recent years over 97,000, 16-to-24-year-olds, often referred to as "Opportunity Youth" were not working and not attending school. Here in Indiana, Black young adults make up the largest share of Opportunity Youth—nearly 1 in 4.

The young people that are neither in school nor working are more likely to experience poverty and to end up in the criminal justice system. They deserve better opportunities.

That work begins with all of us. Whether you're a youth worker, a teacher, a corrections officer, a community leader, or a legislator.

Too many children in Indiana live in a neighborhood without a rec center, an afterschool program, a library, or even a sidewalk. In fact, for every Hoosier child in an afterschool program, 3 more were waiting to get in. That means over 400,000 children missed out on programming. Think of what they missed.

Furthermore, almost 30 percent of Indiana's young people, age 6-17, had not participated in any organized activities after school or on weekends during the past year. Over 60 percent had not participated in any community service or volunteer work that year.

Today's young people need resources, and they need role models.

That's why we can all play a role: Big Brother/Big Sister, JAG, the Center for Leadership Development, EmployIndy, 100 Black Men, Indiana Youth Group, and so many other organizations provide invaluable opportunities for youth every day across our state.

We can all be part of the solution and we're going to have to be.

In some ways, it's never been easier to be a child.

In some ways, it's never been more challenging.

We can already see the effects of COVID-19 on adverse childhood experiences.

The pandemic affected society where we were already most at risk.

More children witnessed domestic violence at home and more of them lived with someone battling substance use disorder. When children returned to the classroom, they brought trauma back with them.

Since the pandemic we've seen a rise in incidents of bullying, arrests on campus, and the number of Indiana students suspended or expelled from school.

It's going to take a real effort to help Indiana's young people adjust to life after the pandemic. That begins by addressing their mental health.

You've probably heard of the youth mental health crisis. Here's what we know.

In Indiana the percentage of high school students who felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks increased from 29 percent in 2016 to 36 percent in 2022. That's over a third of our youth.

Today Indiana ranks 10th for children at risk of depression.

We're 15th for youth at risk for suicidal ideation.

In fact, 17 percent of our high school students reported seriously considering suicide. That's one in six high school students ... that means that it is someone that you know.

That's a tragedy we rarely had to deal with growing up. Middle school and high school are supposed to suck sometimes. They are never supposed to be life-threatening.

We're only beginning to understand youth mental health crisis, from the impacts of the pandemic to the role of social media algorithms.

But we can, and must, begin to act.

Our mental health provider-to-population ratio far exceeds surrounding states. That's a good place to begin, by increasing access to school-based mental health services.

In Vigo County, they're doing that through a Project AWARE grant that funds therapists and trains teachers on how to assess the issues facing their students. Dr. Megan Kirk received our 2023 Youth Worker of the Year Award.

She's here with us today. Please join me in thanking her and the many others doing this important work across our state.

We should celebrate the example of youth workers supporting our young people. But we should be supporting them too.

Last fall, IYI along with partners the Indiana Afterschool Network, IYSA, IARCA, and MCCOY launched the Youth Worker Well-Being Project. The first of its kind in the country, it's an effort "to care for the caregivers, so they can take care of our kids."

Through this initiative there are grants, peer support groups, leadership development opportunities, and no cost access to telemedicine and virtual mental health care. Since launching on January 1st, over 11,000 youth workers from more 200 organizations have signed up for those services. That's inspiring progress.

Finally, we should talk about one other crisis facing Indiana. And that's access to early childhood education.

Indiana is one of 33 states where infant care is more expensive than college tuition at a 4 year public university.

The estimated demand for early childhood programming in Indiana is nearly double the capacity of licensed providers. Of what is currently available, only half are high-quality providers.

And that's unfair to our kids.

We know that children who have access to early childhood programs are less likely to drop out of school and more likely to contribute to society.

It's estimated that for every dollar invested in these programs, we'll get a return of $4. That's an investment in the future.

This is a workforce issue because it frees up parents to work.

It's an economic issue because it helps us compete for employers.

But at its heart, this issue is a measure for how we value children.

We either provide the kind of care they deserve, or we fall short.

I want to thank our friends and partners in this room.

Today's results show improvement, and those improvements are because of you. But as I close, I also want to challenge you.

If Indiana's children aren't reading at grade level, if they're struggling with mental health, that's the responsibility of all of us.

The State of the Child is really a report card for adults.

And I want you to think about what that means.

Almost 80 percent of Indiana high school students report spending 3 hours per day on screen time outside of schoolwork.

Our younger generations have fewer friends than we did, and they are less likely to date.

Instead, they are staying home and watching TikTok and YouTube or playing video games.

At times they seem to lack purpose and direction. And we get on them about it. But they didn't create these problems. They're only mirroring the behavior they see from us.

Today's children are the reflection of what we do and how we act. In the end, the State of the Child is the state of our society.

It's the state of our schools, our economy, and our healthcare system.

It's what we tolerate and what we prioritize. It's the legacy we leave behind. That's why it's important for the adults in this room to set a good example. To interact with our children instead of handing them a tablet. To have real conversations with our teenagers and to give them real responsibilities. Because when we give them those responsibilities, they're up to the challenge—like the young leaders you see in the Statehouse today.

We've dedicated our careers to serving kids in Indiana. That shouldn't end when we leave here today.

At the beginning of this address, I asked you to remember your childhood. I ask you to remember the best days and the worst ones.

Today's children will face the same disappointments. They'll fail the big test. They'll get cut from the team. They'll get dumped by their high school crush.

We cannot guarantee a happy childhood. That's not how this works. But we can be there to listen. We can open new doors of opportunities. We can help kids overcome adversity. And we can teach them how to thrive. There's a saying, "Be the person you needed when you were a child." That should be our calling.

Most of us shifted away from our childhood dreams. We never raced in the Indy 500, and we didn't go to outer space.

Instead, we became and are still becoming the best version of ourselves.

That's because of the people who were there for us. And that's what we're asking now of you.

The State of the Child in Indiana is good. It could be even better.

Together, think of what we can achieve.

Thank you

WINNER: TED TALK/TEDX TALK

"The Coffee Shop Test"

Written and delivered by Lawrence Bernstein,
Director, Great Speech Writing and Communication

//

Delivered at Royal Holloway,
University of London, Jan. 27, 2024

Good afternoon, everybody.

Everyone here has been incredibly kind and welcoming. I parked the car, came out of the car park, and someone immediately came up to me, asked what I was up to, and said they'd look after everything. Then they said, "I hope it goes well." I thought, "I haven't really focused on it going well!" What does that even mean today?

If you're not feeling particularly positive, "going well" might just mean not forgetting what you're going to say—which would be quite helpful. It might mean nobody laughing at you (unless you're telling a joke) or not seeing people falling asleep, looking at their phones, or ignoring you.

These are, by the way, three of the biggest fears people have subconsciously when they're about to speak in public.

I'm going to set my sights just a bit higher and say I'd love it if the only thing you take away from this talk is that, next time you give a speech, presentation, or seminar, you remember these two cups of coffee. For the non-coffee drinkers among you, peppermint tea—or even a beer—is absolutely fine.

Because the sad truth is, however hard we work at what we're going to say, and however much we learn the facts and figures, by this time tomorrow, I'll be amazed if you remember more than one thing I've said. The same goes for the other amazing speakers with their brilliant stories.

We live in such a phenomenally noisy, busy world. We've got WhatsApps, apps, streams, things to watch, things to do, dates to go on, and games to attend. By this time tomorrow, these talks will be a distant memory. It's extraordinary how selective our brains are about what we remember.

This doesn't help nervous public speakers. That fear is a real problem because it means we approach speeches worried about how we'll look or sound. It's why people often act unlike themselves. Some start talking really quickly and rush through their content, while others freeze, stand still, and lose all their energy, speaking in a monotone.

This is the fight-or-flight response. When we feel that spotlight on us, we start to behave in unnatural ways.

Now, this is where I come back to the cup of coffee. After this, if I bump into you at the canteen and we chat, you might ask me about my weekend. If you're wearing a football shirt, I might say I'm looking forward to watching a game on TV. Or I might say, "I'm knackered after all that prep for TED. I'll spend the weekend watching boxsets."

What I wouldn't say is, "Thank you for asking. Let me break my weekend into 12 points. First, I'll introduce the concept of the weekend, talk about its post-industrial origins, and then move through each segment." If I talked like that, you'd think I was slightly odd.

We laugh about this, but when we're under pressure—especially in professional or academic settings—we start talking that way.

Let me share two recent jobs to illustrate this point.

A few months ago, I visited a university campus where the HR team wanted help developing their communication skills. Sometimes, people in these groups don't want to attend courses; they're busy and may feel defensive. But this day, the sun was shining, and the head of HR was phenomenally friendly. She made me feel completely at ease, and I knew it was going to be a good day.

When we got started, I asked each participant to talk for one minute about something important at work while I filmed them. The head of HR, let's call her Jane, went first.

Jane stood up and said, "Well, there are a number of reasons we're here today, and the important thing is the LRUs…" She went on like this for a minute. At the end, I asked her colleagues, "What's an LRU?" Blank faces. I asked Jane, and she said, "Oh, it's a Learning Receptor Unit."

Does anyone know what that is? Turns out, "Learning Receptor Unit" was HR jargon for "delegate." But Jane had failed the "coffee shop test."

When we talked earlier over coffee, she was warm and engaging. But under pressure, she sounded like a corporate robot.

Another time, I worked with a transport provider's boardroom. Engineers came in to present on new projects and request funding. One engineer, Jim, presented a proposal for a footbridge. He put up a dense slide of notes and graphs and said, "I'm going to talk about the footbridge, its background, and the type of material we'll use."

He didn't mention that the bridge was to save children's lives.

I asked him later, and he explained there was a busy junction near a school where children ran across daily. Three had nearly died recently. But he didn't say any of that in his presentation. He thought he needed to stick to "professional" details.

Jim had also failed the coffee shop test.

Whether it's a birthday speech, a job interview, or a TED Talk, we need to appeal to people's human

side. When we're relaxed, we naturally use stories to connect. Even complex subjects come to life when we share stories.

Take the Post Office scandal in the UK. It had been covered in technical detail for years, but a TV show about the people involved finally made the public connect emotionally, and change happened almost immediately. That's the power of storytelling.

Of course, detail matters. But introducing a topic like you would with a friend over coffee is a brilliant way to hook an audience before diving into details.

When we talk to friends, we get to the key message quickly. We don't waste time worrying about how we'll look or sound; we just communicate naturally.

So next time you speak in public, think about those two cups of coffee. Imagine you're talking to a friend. Your natural charisma will shine through, and you'll feel more confident and relaxed.

Thank you very much.