



Beyond the Book[®]



REPORTING IRAQ: AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE WAR BY THE JOURNALISTS WHO COVERED IT – PART 3

KENNEALLY:

I want to welcome you to stay if you want to, to ask questions of any of those on our panel here. We have a microphone at the center, if you want to use that. If you can shout loud enough to be heard from the back, you're welcome to do that, too, rather than fight your way forward. But please do, if there is a question from the audience? Do we have any questions? Absolutely, OK.

M: Hi, thank you for being here. My question for you is how do you validate your neutrality? For example, as professional journalists, I know that obviously you have to be neutral when you're reporting, but I've seen situations where bloggers and pundits will take one article or one news clip and derive a liberal-leaning perspective from it and a conservative-leaning perspective from one article. So does that, for you, validate your neutrality as a professional journalist, to say the fact that my piece or my article was able to derive two different perspectives, I'm neutral. I'm OK.

ARRAF: I guess if everyone's criticizing you, you sort of know that you're doing OK and not going too far one way of the political spectrum. I guess the short answer is that you have to, I think, sort of second-guess yourself a lot, because no one is completely neutral. You're shaped by your upbringing. You're shaped by the things you've seen. I've certainly been shaped by all of the things that I've seen unfold in front of me in Iraq, and it means that when you go to write a sentence or say a sentence on television, in the back of your mind, I think a lot of us think to ourselves, OK, am I missing anything? What is it that I'm missing? And that's I think a lot of what good journalism is about, knowing what you're missing and trying to compensate for it. So it takes an effort.

KENNEALLY: And that's an ongoing effort. No one's perfect. You may miss it, as you say, the first time, but when you go back the second time, and as you evolve as a reporter in the scene, you will learn and it will be shaped by that experience of oops, I should have done something else. I've learned.

ARRAF: And mostly it's not about really facts so much. It's about allowing – it's about putting a difference perception, putting a different interpretation, on what you've seen. For instance, let me make that a little bit more concrete. If I'm going in to assess what's happening in a Baghdad neighborhood – as I did. I was there for a website for a few weeks in May. I went into a neighborhood that I had been in before and it had been calm before. It was two years earlier. And now there was fighting going on and there were actually wounded people being carried in. Now, you could go in there and you could say this is incredible. It means nothing is working here. Or you could go in and find out – suspend your automatic assumptions and find out what has happened in that neighborhood, who's doing the fighting, and try to put that in context. It is, again, it's like putting together pieces of a puzzle, and you don't always get all the pieces, but the main thing is to keep looking for those pieces and fitting them in. So it becomes somewhat a little bit more coherent. And that was an extremely incoherent answer, so I'm sorry.

(laughter)

M: Thank you.

KENNEALLY: OK, our next question, please. And tell us who the question's for.

M: Jane, I want to thank you for your reporting.

ARRAF: Thank you.

M: There were quite a few months when I had to sit in front of my TV set until 2:00 in the morning. My son was there. He survived.

ARRAF: Oh, thank God.

M: And during Najaf.

ARRAF: Was in Najaf?

M: Yeah. Your reporting was one of my principal links, if not the principal link, to what my son might be doing in Najaf. And as soon as he got out, I went to Frankfurt and I spent a week at the base – First Armored Division base – with him and his fellow Scouts. And there was actually an amusing afterthought. He showed me many pictures that he had taken. And he showed me one, and said this is the day we had to protect Jane.

(laughter)

ARRAF: I bet he loved that.

(laughter)

M: I think he was jealous of you. But thank you.

ARRAF: Thank you. And let's talk after. I'd love to hear about how your son is doing.

M: Good.

ARRAF: Thank you.

KENNEALLY: But Jane, did you have a sense in those years as an embedded reporter, of how the military units you were with thought of you? Did some of them think that they were protecting you or babysitting your, or what did they think about having you around?

ARRAF: It generally started off with do we really have to take these reporters? We've got better things to do with our time. To, at the end of it – I've become very close friends with a lot of those guys that we were embedded with. You can't spend that much time with people and not – it's almost impossible to explain briefly. But basically, you kind of bond out there, and that's another thing that goes into that equation of credible reporting, but at the end of it generally they say, you know, we normally hate reporters but you're all right. So you know then that you've kind of done OK.

KENNEALLY: So it's sort of like with the Colonel, some of your best friends are in the military. (inaudible) –

ARRAF: I guess it's because you deal with the same stuff, that's basically – you just come at it from different perspectives, but it's kind of the same.

KENNEALLY: Our next question.

F: Hi, thank you. I was curious about what role, if any, the fact that so many of the news organizations are owned by private companies now, like Disney and GE, now that might limit not only reporting access and what you're allowed to report, and also in terms of the military, does that limit the military in any way of what information they're allowed to put out there to us?

KENNEALLY: Sounds like an opportunity for everybody to speak, but Mike, do you think that makes a difference?

HOYT: The difference it makes in my mind is there is such a squeeze for profits now. It's not that they're owned by GE or Disney or whatever, but it's that they're all in such a ratings race. And as Jane said, Britney's going to get bigger ratings than the latest nuance from Najaf. So that is a problem, I think, balanced by the mission of journalism. We just did an editorial commenting on the *New York Times*, to stay in Iraq, the budget is \$3 million a year, not counting salaries. And that's a period

when they're under tremendous pressure. Of course, they have a family ownership. They're somewhat protected from corporate pressures, but not totally. So there's a balancing factor of doing the mission. If a bean counter was in charge of the *New York Times*, they wouldn't be doing that, probably. And that's true of other media outlets as well. So you've got to hand it to them as well.

To have the Mil Blogs and so forth give you slices and pieces, but to try to see it comprehensively – the country is so complex – it's like the elephant and the blind man. You really need serious money, actually. You need a lot of investment in the infrastructure and reporting to try to get a true picture. And some media companies still do that.

KENNEALLY: And Jane, just to follow on that, you were not only a correspondent, but at one point, the bureau chief, so you had a kind of managerial role. Can you talk to that – the pressures of the budget and how it affects what you're going to report on and who you're going to send where?

ARRAF: The budget is always ever-present. I guess the effect I see most is not so much budget constraints, although we are seeing that now with coverage in Iraq in general. There are fewer and fewer newspapers, television stations, media organizations that are willing to send reporters because it's very, very expensive. But where I think it comes into play is the fact that we have to remember that the news business is, at the end of the day, a business. And it is about ratings and it's about readership, and particularly in television, it's – people often think that we get editorial control telling us how to slant a story. We don't, for the most part. What we do get is the knowledge – inescapable knowledge – that this is a story that people have to want to watch. No matter how worthy the story is, we can't do it if we don't think that people are going to watch it, and that's where the commercial aspect comes in, I think.

KENNEALLY: And Colonel, does that play a role at all in your thinking about where you want to take reporters or what you're doing with your own part of the story?

BAGGIO: As soon as she asked the question, I wrote down budgets, and that's the same thing. I hear it at the Pentagon Bureau, too. And that's my biggest concern. I have no ethical concerns at all with the bigger companies. But my biggest concern is having the reporters out there. And it's interesting, the same sort of things that Jane said. The journalists that I know, it is about ratings a lot of times, which can be frustrating to us, but that's the reality of it. And that's, I think, most of the savvy public affairs officers realize that as well. So we try to do as much as we can to make our stories compelling.

One of the things that's a frustration – and this is a little bit of a tangent, but I think it's a relevant point I wanted to make, is that – and I think Mr. Hoyt mentioned it earlier. One of the frustrations that I think that we're seeing now is that just recently, a few days ago, we had a Lieutenant Jackson was awarded the

Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest award next to the Medal of Honor. And it was – matter of fact, we had a lot of net (inaudible) – CNN, ABC – most of the networks were there covering it. But we had trouble getting print people. Unfortunately, the ceremony was like 4:00 in the afternoon on a Friday, and it was hard to get people to cover it. So I think the frustrating thing for us right now is people who don't want to tell the hero stories as much, whereas a lot of times when you see stories out there – like the Abu Ghraibs, those kinds of things – there's never any lack of want for folks wanting to tell those stories, but it's a little bit more challenging to tell the heroic stories. And then so if we can't make them compelling, and budgets and all that sort of thing are going to be a factor, I think that could be the factor from the military side.

KENNEALLY: Our next question, please.

F: Thank you very much. I'd like to thank all of you for coming today. It's a really important topic. I have a comment and a question. My comment is as an American citizen, I do not want to hear more about Britney. I am not the one pushing the ratings, thank you very much.

(applause)

Nobody ever asked me my opinion, so I don't know how those ratings come out, but I want to encourage all of you to keep doing what you're doing. We need to know. And I continue to have the feeling that we're not getting everything we need to know about this. So please, despite the budgets and – just don't assume that we don't want to know.

(applause)

I guess we do. All right.

My question is about another group of hundreds of thousands. I'm seeing numbers like 180,000 contractors who are working in Iraq. How is their story – how are you getting information about what they're doing? How are you reporting on that large number of people who are there? I rarely see anything except the Blackwater story. What's going on and how do you get to that, or can you? Are you having difficulty getting that out? We'd like to know. Thank you.

KENNEALLY: I think that's an interesting point, because it's what makes – we've been talking about what makes Iraq different than previous conflicts, and the decision by the military to use contractors in all aspects of the war effort has really made Iraq a singular event. So Jane, what is it like for you?

ARRAF: In the first hotel that we stayed at, the Palestine Hotel, where there were a lot of reporters based in the first couple of years of the war, Blackwater had a – this isn't just Blackwater – but Blackwater had a few of the floors reserved for them. And if

you were unlucky enough to have accidentally hit the wrong button and the elevator doors opened on one of their floors, you would be met by somebody pointing a gun. And that was essentially how they responded to media inquiries as well.

(laughter)

Very, very, very difficult to cover contractors in general. You're always told that they have to call head office or you have to call head office, and at the end of the day, the best you get normally is some sort of press release or some statement. It is undercover. They're one of the biggest armies there and we have not been able to cover them.

KENNEALLY: And we've been talking about the relationship between the military and the media, and I really appreciate that question, because that's a factor that's sort of outside that circle and one where they don't have to talk to you. The military does have to talk to the reporters. You can't avoid it. Mike, does that come up in the book at all or in the conversations you've had with the reporters?

HOYT: It came up – actually, we had a panel about – sort of springing from the book. And someone from the audience asked a very similar question. It was a variation on it. It was why did it take so long to get to the Blackwater story? And the answer people gave was that it's – basically what you said – that it's a very, very hard story to do and that, as one reporter said, because they will shoot at you. They actually will. But I think – I mentioned having dinner with this young *ex-Boston Globe* reporter, now *New York Times*. She was wondering herself. She was thinking aloud, why did it take us so long to get to that, even though it's hard? So I don't know the answer, but it was obviously a huge – was and is a huge story, Blackwater and everybody else. I don't really know the answer. I know that it's very difficult, but it's very important.

KENNEALLY: Just to say, we'll take questions, and people are welcome to stay. I don't think we have anyone coming in after us, so we're not in a hurry, but I know the Colonel may be in a hurry, so at some point when you have the need to get out of here, please just let us know. But next question.

F: Jane, particularly, how can the reading public determine objectivity of a story?

ARRAF: It depends what you mean by objectivity.

F: What the truth really is.

(laughter)

ARRAF: Ooh, that's an even trickier one.

KENNEALLY: What is the truth, Jane? Tell us what's the truth.

ARRAF: I would be paid a lot more money if I knew that. But by that question I assume you're unhappy with what you're reading.

F: Not necessarily. I have to know that what I'm reading is what really is going on, and it's not been slanted or edited or spinned off or changed.

ARRAF: OK. I like to think – and you can correct me. I do like to think that any experienced reporter out there is not slanting things to a great extent. There is a natural slant that goes on when you've covered a story, among more experienced reporters, I think, because they have more of a body of knowledge to draw on, but I have almost never – and Colonel Baggio, I'd appreciate your input as well – I've almost never met a reporter who has gone out there saying I'm going to do this story and I don't care what the evidence is. It tends not to work that way. Where I do find misleading stories is where you don't have enough information, and I think you should have more information in stories. You might get misleading stories in the blogs, for instance, which look like stories, but it's a certain point of view, and it is ignoring huge bodies of other available evidence. I think if you're reading a major newspaper, you can be fairly confident that the journalistic standards are there.

HOYT: I got to agree with that in the sense that I think – I'm prejudiced. I think most reporters are intellectually honest. But I think that's just part of the makeup. Of course there are bad cops, there are bad judges, there are bad doctors, there are bad reporters. But I also think that war reporters tend to be among the best of us. I really do. I think they have a something about them wants to bear witness. And I don't think you go to Iraq – there's no need to sensationalize. There's plenty of sensation. And they're just not that – I don't think they tend to be that kind of people. I think they go to bear witness.

F: Thank you.

BAGGIO: I just want to make a quick comment. I'd just say read multiple sources. You can't read everything, but what I do is, I developed – the military call it battle rhythm. There's certain things I'll look at, and I'll look at those consistently. But it's got to be a spectrum and just that way you'll get a feel.

I do agree, most journalists that I've dealt with are pretty straightforward. There are some with agendas. I've ran into some of those. And one of the other problems are I've met great journalist who have had editors higher up who have taken out portions of their stories or put other things in it. And the journalist has come to me to talk to me about it and felt frustrated. But generally speaking, I think it's usually not that great an issue, but there are some. But what I always tell the soldiers who as me that same question, read other things. If you think one source is wrong, read

something else. And if you start seeing it's the same thing, then maybe that'll convince you.

KENNEALLY: The rule of journalism school, Mike, I think is if your mother says she loves you, check it out.

(laughter)

HOYT: That's true.

KENNEALLY: And so you read something in the paper and you're not entirely sure, check it out and read something else. Yes, next question.

M: I've been accused of dozing off more when watching the news as I get a little older. But I just wonder why we don't see or read about the more positive things that are going on in Iraq rather than the body parts that are always being shown. That's a comment. And one other comment is I'd like to know how we're doing over there because you get a little different stories. And what would happen if we pulled out of Iraq tomorrow or in a month or three months?

KENNEALLY: There's a lot of questions there, but –

(laughter)

KENNEALLY: More than one.

M: Well, there were three people, so I –

KENNEALLY: That's fair enough. But Mike, there's a comment from John Burns, the *New York Times* correspondent, who was asked that very question about there aren't enough good stories quote unquote, and he responded how?

HOYT: He said you're not reading my stories. He said you should go to NEXUS and look me up and check me out and then come back and ask that question. Although I know where the question's coming from, I think there's a struggle for narratives going on over the war right now –

M: And ratings.

HOYT: Yeah, ratings as well. But the narrative part is right now, there's one over the surge. Is the surge successful? And there's a narrative that says yes, it is, and the statistics seem to be really true. The deaths are going down, and there do seem to be these deals, and there does seem to be areas where people are getting tired of fighting. The flip side of that is the whole purpose was to make the political space to create a country and have these sides come together, and there doesn't seem to be a lot of evidence to that at all. And then some people think the quiet is just a

quiet because the ethnic cleansing is done. So there's a battle over narratives and you just have to trust to intellectual honest reporters to do their best to figure it out.

KENNEALLY: Jane, I wonder, and it's not just a fight for good and bad stories, but there's a vocabulary in Iraq of good guys and bad guys so forth. Does it seem, when you are there and reporting – and one of the other questions in that series of questions was what's it like today? Does it seem good and bad, good vs. bad at this moment? Is it that kind of a story?

ARRAF: It's not, and I think that's part of the problem, because we want things to be black and white, and the closer you get to that story, the more you walk around the streets and talk to people, the more you realize it is just all shades of gray. I would feel I was not doing my job – and I really think being a journalist is something that carries immense obligations with it – I would feel I were not doing my job if, in the limited time I had to tell Americans what was going on in Iraq that day, I focused on, for instance, something that the military is always wanting us to do, a school going up, a school reopening, because I know that in most neighborhoods in Baghdad, that school reopens. That does mean there aren't going to be bombs going off. That doesn't mean the kids are going to be able to go to school. If we had more reporters, we could go out there and do those stories, which doesn't mean that I don't try to do positive stories. It is a really depressing story to cover year after year and I want to see progress. I want to see good things happening. And every time, essentially, I try to do a story that involves Iraqis, of good news – I was doing a story on a Shia woman who was marrying a Sunni man, to show that people are still being intermarried. And then when I went back to try to follow up on that story, to try to actually film it, I was told, oh, actually, the bride was killed. I can't tell you how many stories end like that. So it's complicated. It's sad. There are some positive things, but if you look at the major trends, so far they've been less than positive, I'd say.

M: The last question about what would happen when we leave.

KENNEALLY: That's a big question and really not about reporting, so we'll leave that one for later, if we could, OK? But Colonel, do you (inaudible) –

BAGGIO: Yeah, I want to make just a quick comment on – first of all, I was going to say the same thing. And I mentioned earlier about how we're challenged. We have to try to make our story appealing to get the attention and it is tough. I would say, just speaking of building the school, part of it is we have to realize what human nature is. Human nature is if there's a house on fire, people go out to watch it. Nobody watches a house being built. So every school that blows up is definitely a story. Maybe every 100 schools that get built are stories. That's a challenge that we have.

I did mention earlier one of the frustrations I have then – and Jane actually did a lot of that – the heroic fighting that went on in Fallujah and told it straight up, but I think a lot more of our heroic stories ought to be told. You could call those good

stories. They got all the elements of action and everything. This Lieutenant Jackson the other day, matter of fact saved his first sergeant and his captain who could have been mortally wounded, had he not stopped their bleeding and continued to fire back and got the Distinguished Service Cross. He was also shot twice himself. Matter of fact, he passed out by the time they got to him. So stories like that sometimes don't get told – frustrate me.

But other than that, those are challenges we have to get our story told. As far as the war in Iraq, I'm not in Iraq right now, so I really can't speak from that. I can just speak on things that I've seen. And just keep in mind, we are nine months into the surge. It's not very long. General Petraeus had asked for time. Give it time. I did make mention before we came in here that one of my great – a guy who I mentored. Every time he does something good, I take credit for it. When he messes up, I say I don't know him. But Lieutenant Colonel Scott Bleichwehl, who's the Public Affairs Officer for the First Cav Division, sent me a BBC piece the other day and it was a very positive piece, talking about – and they used the term cautiously optimistic about what's going on in Baghdad right now. So let's see what happens. The jury's still out.

M: Thank you very much.

KENNEALLY: Next question, please.

F: I have a question and a comment. I'd like to thank the Colonel for his service to this country.

(applause)

My Dad was in the Marines during Vietnam, so I understand what it's like to have a family member in harm's way. And my question are to Mike and Jane. When you deal with reporting, what, in terms of censorship by the government or by your news affiliation – how do you deal with that?

ARRAF: The only cases of censorship that I've seen have been during the war, during – I keep forgetting it's still the war. I'm sorry. During the beginning of the war, major combat, when that main battle was being fought, and in Fallujah, where every tape that we had had to go through a military censor. Also the trial of Saddam, that had. But for the most part, you aren't subjected to what we consider classic censorship, which is somebody – an official – seeing the tape or seeing your story before it goes out. What happens is that you have to deal with the consequences, so that's a different form of censorship, where you have to deal with the fact that you know that if you do this story or include this, there might be negative repercussions. And more often, in Iraq, that if you include information or show someone's face, they could very well be killed. So that's more of what the censorship is like now.

F: Do you hear a lot from Washington, like people in Washington?

ARRAF: I certainly heard more before the war. I was the only Western reporter based there for some time, so I was a reporter for an American news organization in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. So yes, we heard a lot – CNN heard a lot from Washington. They did not want that bureau to exist. They didn't think that Americans should know what Iraqi officials were saying, and there were a lot of complaints.

KENNEALLY: Mike, related to that question and going back to the story you told about the encounter with the carload of Iraqis, you talked about how the photojournalist was able to upload those pictures and they were instantly received back home. If it was the Spanish Civil War, Robert Capa would have had to have an intricate network of carriers and so forth to get the film from his camera to Paris. And it's a lot easier at some stage in that long chain to do some sort of censorship, to take the film, to destroy it. It seems to me that the new technologies are making it harder than ever to censor something. How can you censor something when it's already gone two seconds after the picture is taken?

HOYT: Yeah, I think that's true. There are satellite phones and there's instant communications. I think you're right, basically. It didn't come up as much of a theme in our book. A little bit came up about self-censorship, where people felt that they were perhaps succumbing to the good news pressure when they shouldn't, or a couple people talked about they heard tales of abuse and just didn't believe them. And some of them around Abu Ghraib, and they wished they'd paid more attention.

KENNEALLY: Right, thank you. And because you've waited so long, we'll take our last question.

F: It's an interesting question, I might say. Or I don't know if it's more of a comment. And it's regarding like an outsider's perspective on journalism as a field and the military as an organization. And I feel there's a strong sense of ethics in both of your fields and they're admirable, in that the Colonel talking about integrity and that he values the accurate and fair reporting. And my brother's in the Marines and he's a recruiter, and I was able to see – to almost be immersed in the Marine culture in Maryland for awhile because I was thinking of joining the Marines, and I saw the values that are taught in the Marines are very interesting, almost like wanting to always stick to a higher goal. And I think with journalism, I see that the higher goal is provide information without a bias, so I think – hearing this almost makes me feel even more inspired again, thinking of the Marines, and doing something in journalism in the Marines.

(laughter)

KENNEALLY: I think the common element, apart from the ethical principles that motivate everyone, is that in the war, at least, both are putting their lives at risk to

do their jobs, the journalists and the military. Perhaps for our last real quick comments we could get each of you to address that. What's it like to be doing a job, not just a desk job, but a job that on a daily basis puts you in danger of losing your life? Jane, you are the first to take that, I think.

ARRAF: It's the last time I was in Iraq, we were – let's see, this was August – really, really hot, like 150 degrees hot. And we were in a Bradley, where we were with this unit that had decided they were going to pick up some Iraqis and pretend to arrest them so they could get information from them and the Iraqis wouldn't get into trouble. So all of a sudden we had 12 people in this Bradley and I was the one who was designated to sort of be made to crouch in the hatch next to the gunner, where I had to contort myself on top of this metal that was almost burning, and then we were stuck in traffic and there was an IED off in the distance. And it was really excruciatingly uncomfortable and a little bit scary and this thought flashed through my head, I have no idea why, but I would still rather be doing this than sitting in the back of a car checking my Blackberry for messages. It's just – that's it.

(applause)

KENNEALLY: Colonel, you told me an interesting story about being out with a reporter covering the election and how it put you both in danger. Perhaps you'll tell that.

BAGGIO: Yeah, actually on the first election day in – which would have been January of 2005, I was actually with Geraldo Rivera, and we were in the middle of nowhere – it's a great story. I have a lot of respect Geraldo. He's a friend of mine, too, and I can give you a different perspective, depending on what you think of him, but he's a great guy. But I will tell you this story. We were on top of a police station west of Baghdad. It was in the middle of nowhere and he'd done his show live from the top of this police station. Right afterwards, we were actually eating MREs. The light had just came up. And we were in this open courtyard and we got mortared. And I mean close enough to where dirt was spraying on us, and we kind of like all jumped down and I might have sort of tackled Geraldo. I don't really quite remember. But we all kind of dived down when this happened. But what's really interesting about that, and talking about the shared danger, and also talking about my hope for what's going on in Iraq from what I saw that day, is what I did witness during that mortar attack, an Iraqi woman got killed. And we were watching. The polling place, you could see where people were lined up voting, and then this mortar attack happened.

And it was devastating. And Geraldo covered that, went out and covered it. But there was like – it wasn't an ambulance. It was like a little pickup truck sort of thing, as I remember, that came, and they placed up the woman. They took her away. And what was amazing to me is I saw those people get back in line and start voting again. And I thought, you know, where I grew up, over in northern Illinois, if there was a rain cloud in the sky, it made people decide not to vote. But these people had the determination to go out. So I think there's always hope. But the

one thing I do think about my media colleagues out there, this conflict, I think, has taken the lives more correspondents than the history of at least our nation and so my hats are off to them. And it's a dangerous mission and we share a lot of that danger together and so – and I just hope we continue to work hand in hand like that.

KENNEALLY: Mike, I want to put you in a hot seat that's not quite as hot as the seat that Jane was in last summer, but to try to sum this up and say a word or two about what it takes to be a war correspondent today in Iraq, as you hear it from all these reporters in the book.

HOYT: Well, I haven't done it, but I have gained enormous respect for the people who do – deepened my respect by doing this book. It takes intellectual honesty and courage and smarts and persistence and it's a job if you're going to spend millions and millions of dollars and take on this enterprise that gambles with history and in which tens of thousands of people lose their lives, then you need independent witnesses to that, to honestly tell you how it's going. And I admire the people who do it.

KENNEALLY: Thank you, Mike. Thank you, Jane. Thank you, Colonel Baggio.

(applause)

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