

**Center for Strategic and International Studies**

**Bob Schieffer's "About the News" with H. Andrew Schwartz  
Podcast**

**Subject: "Two Maggies: Maggie Haberman's Coverage of Donald  
Trump"**

**Speaker:  
Maggie Haberman,  
White House Correspondent,  
The New York Times**

**Hosts:  
H. Andrew Schwartz,  
Senior Vice President for External Relations,  
CSIS**

**Bob Schieffer,  
CBS Political News Contributor;  
Former Host, "Face the Nation," CBS News**

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(Music plays.)

BOB SCHIEFFER: I'm Bob Schieffer.

H. ANDREW SCHWARTZ: And I'm Andrew Schwartz.

MR. SCHIEFFER: And these are conversations about the news. We are in the midst of a communications revolution. We have access to more information than any people in history. But are we more informed, or just overwhelmed by so much information we can't process it?

MR. SCHWARTZ: These conversations are a year-long collaboration of the Bob Schieffer College of Communication at Texas Christian University and the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

(Music plays.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: Maggie Haberman, the White House correspondent for The New York Times joins us this morning from New York. Maggie comes by journalism naturally. Her dad, Clyde Haberman, was a longtime fixture at The New York Times. She got to know Donald Trump during her days as a reporter for The New York Post.

Maggie, your colleague at the Times, Glenn Thrush, said when Trump came to Washington and covering the campaigns, the other reporters were surprised at all of the things that he did. But he says, like you, he came up through the New York tabs. And so he said the two of you just sort of took Trump as business as usual. Is that – is that right?

MAGGIE HABERMAN: I think that's exactly right. And thank you for having me. Look, there's been this very delayed-response reaction in Washington where, as you know, the coverage of the campaign is often bifurcated from the reporters who cover the government, once there is a president. And Trump was so in the campaign unlike anything we had seen from a major party nominee, and really that we'd only seen something like this from a fringe candidate who was never going to go very far. In this case, the fringe candidate won the nomination in an incredibly divided field with about, you know, 30 percent of the vote for most of the primary cycle.

But, you know, there has been this sort of extended stage of shock. And I have said a couple of times in the course of the last two months that it's really time for people to move toward the acceptance stage, because this is who he is. And if you watch the campaign and if you actually read the coverage, you would see that it's this sort of series of fits and starts where he takes two steps forward and, you know, one and a half steps back, and sometimes two steps forward and four steps back. There is some forward motion, but a lot of it is just sort of heat without much happening.

And that's very much what he's bringing to the presidency. I mean, he's—somebody gchatted me – messaged me over Google a couple weeks ago, a colleague, and she said: This is

worse than I thought it would be, just in terms of – this was right after he fired Comey. And I said, this is exactly what I thought it would be. He is who he is. And he was never going to change. And there was all this talk about a pivot during the campaign. And that pivot never came.

And so I think if people can eliminate shock from their response, it will be helpful to them covering him. I do think that there's a difference between being sort of vigilant in coverage and rigorous in coverage when something is incredibly unusual and worthy of it – such as firing the FBI director who is overseeing a probe that touches on your campaign. And I think that the problem is that the tenor of reaction to Trump had been, you know, an 11 on a scale of one to 10 for so long that when Comey happened, I think that for some in D.C., and I think certainly for readers and viewers nationally, it becomes harder to tell what is truly unusual.

MR. SCHIEFFER: What is it like to cover him? I mean, that's the question that people ask me. (Laughter.) And I'm – you know, I don't – I'm not in touch with him, or the story, even, as you are. I mean, it's your whole life now. I mean, it must go from dawn till dark and then beyond that. But what's your – what's your workday like when you're covering Donald Trump?

MS. HABERMAN: It is – it is pretty tiring. (Laughs.) It doesn't stop. You know, it begins with his tweets, which can be as early as 5:00 in the morning, although they're usually a bit later these days. And then – and then it just goes through the evening. And it's like being in a boat that gets sort of buffeted by a storm of waves crashing against it every three hours or so. Things calm down, and then they just start all over again. So what is really hard covering him – and this was true in the campaign too, recharging is really hard, and taking a step back and looking at the bigger picture, because there is so much happening and there's so much activity that you don't want to miss anything.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So what's he like to you? Is he mean? Is he temperamental? Is he pouty? Is he business-like? What's he like when you talk to him on the phone, and I understand that you do talk to him on the phone, or when you talk to him in person?

MS. HABERMAN: Glenn and I saw him early on in his presidency in the Oval Office. And he said to me – he said, there's two Maggies, the one who – the one who talks to me and the one who writes about me – he, meaning the president, said that. And that's actually a pretty astute observation about how reporters do their jobs in general. Look, you know, he's very pleasant when we speak, except for when he's not. There are times when he's yelling at me and telling me that he thinks my coverage is unfair.

You know, we had a couple of uncomfortable moments when we did an interview with him about infrastructure a couple of weeks ago – months ago, at this point, where he was berating me about news coverage. You know, it's just who he is and it's what he does. And he's interesting, in that, you know, he kind of likes the back and forth. So some of it is ventilation. Some of it he said in our interview with him, when he was starting in with me about an ancient slight that had absolutely no relation – or, it was even a perceived slight, it wasn't even a real slight – that had relation to what was going on in front of us. Glenn said, you know, what does

this have to do with cars, because we were there ostensibly about infrastructure. And people sort of laughed. And the president said, oh, this is like therapy.

And I think that's true for him, in some respect. He also doesn't really respect people who let him just scream at them. I mean, one of the problems for people in his orbit is, you know, he really does yell and he really does believe in dominance. And people sort of get beaten down. He really will roll right over you if you don't stand your ground. And so when we have a conversation about something he doesn't like, I usually push back – always push back if – you know. There's times I think he has a fair point, but I push back in a polite, but pretty firm way.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I would never ask you to reveal your sources for stories, but it's my understanding that Joe Scarborough said this morning on his broadcast that the stories about Jared Kushner came from Steve Bannon. And I know you were one of the people who wrote about that – wrote about Kushner, I mean, and his conversations with the Russians. What would you say about that?

MS. HABERMAN: I can say that Joe is entitled to say whatever he wants about whatever he wants and however he wants. But we don't talk about sources.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, of course you don't. (Laughter.) But you, being a reporter, you know, I had – I had to ask.

MS. HABERMAN: Of course. Oh, no, no, no. Of course.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Tell me about Bannon. Do you deal with him? And what's he like?

MS. HABERMAN: You know, I mean, I think that – I think that everybody who is covering the White House, or almost everybody who's covering the White House, has dealt with Steve Bannon at one time or another. And he was – he came into the campaign, which I was covering. And I had gone on his radio show once or twice when he was at Breitbart. You know, he can be – he's very smart, and he can be very charming. You know, Trump is also very charming. There is a sort of similar salesman quality that I think both of them have. But I think that – I think that he – this puppet master image that has been affixed to him, basically since the earliest days of the administration, have not pleased the president, who does not like the idea of anybody being seen as controlling him – whether it's Jared Kushner or Steve Bannon.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Who would you say is the dominant force in the White House right now, Kushner or Bannon? Most people gave Bannon credit for the leaving the climate agreement?

MS. HABERMAN: I think it's the wrong question, respectfully, in the sense that – like, and everybody sort of, I think, looks at it through that prism. I mean, I think the president was never going to withdraw from the Paris Accord – I mean, I'm sorry, was never going to remain in the Paris Accord. And so the question then became how did he withdraw. And that was really where the argument was. And in that respect, you know, he's sticking by the four-year withdrawal process, I don't know that that's a win for Bannon. I think Bannon probably would

have wanted him to do it right away.

So I think that – I think that the president is a little more autonomous than people think. I don't think it's – I don't think he's sort of wandering around, Chauncey Gardiner-like in every situation, waiting to be pulled on by one pull or the other. I do think that the reports of Steve Bannon's diminishment were right in the moment, but I think were exaggerated. You know, he – Trump doesn't fire anybody. And he never really ices anybody out totally. Everything – I mean, he's – somebody said this to me, and it was a very smart point, that Trump is – he's not a manager, he's a – he's a deals guy. And so he sees everything as being on some sliding scale of deal-making. And so you never totally jettison somebody because they might be useful to you someday.

MR. SCHIEFFER: That's a very interesting point. And I have to say, I never – I never really thought of it quite that way. Let me bring in Andrew Schwartz here.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Hi, Maggie. Thanks for being here with us. All White Houses are about the people who occupy them, the staff, the people around the president. But this one in particular has a real sense of personalities around it. Not just Jared, not just Steve Bannon. I want to ask you about Gary Cohn. You know, Gary Cohn spent most of his career on the international business stage. You know, full disclosure, I know where he's from. He's from Shaker Heights, Ohio, outside of Cleveland, where my in-laws are from. My father-in-law and Gary's father worked construction together when they were kids.

But I saw Gary yesterday. I wasn't physically there, but I saw the photos of him in the Rose Garden while the president announced the climate accord withdrawal. And Gary is in to total shvitz. Now, it might have been hot in the Rose Garden, I don't know. But is his influence declining?

MS. HABERMAN: I think that – I don't think that Gary Cohn and the president have ever had tremendous chemistry. I think that Cohn has this aspirational quality that Donald Trump really likes. Remember Glenn and I did a story about the top 20 people outside of the White House who were influencers with Trump. And, you know, a lot of them are CEOs. And a lot of those CEOs were people who really would not have taken Donald Trump's calls before he was president, or even the nominee for the party. You know, Trump was never seen as a titan of business. You know, he was sort of laughed at by the New York business community. Remember, the phrase you will hear Donald Trump saying over and over again is: Someone is laughing at us. Someone is laughing at us. You know, that is – that looms very large for him, not being laughed at.

So I think he liked the idea of Cohn. But he and Cohn I don't think have a tremendous amount of synergy. And I think Gary Cohn said a couple of things on that – the Europe leg of the – of the foreign trip that the president just came back from that did not endear him to the president. Among other things, he talked about whether it was, you know, smart at all to focus on coal as an energy. That was a huge campaign promise for Trump. And while it is true that, you know, there are not actually – there are not these, you know, hundreds of thousands of mining jobs that the president makes it sound like they're just waiting to be returned, there aren't

really that many, it was very against what the president thinks. And I think it's really important – you know, you have a White House, to your – to your point, Andrew, that's – it's filled with principles. It's filled with very, very senior people who are not used to being staff. And I think Gary Cohn falls in that category.

And so he said another thing where he talked about the president. And this, I think, really was a factor in Trump's mind moving forward on climate that I think has not gotten a lot of attention. But, yes, I know that, you know, the Macron handshake obviously gave him a nudge. But I think that Gary Cohn's saying that the president was, you know, focusing on the climate accord and getting – and he was trying to get smarter. That is a terrible thing to say about Donald Trump is you are hoping to influence Donald Trump. He never wants to be told that he's not smart enough. So I think that Cohn is still figuring out the ropes internally. And I guess I would just say that, I mean, if you divide these things, as Bob did earlier on, into two camps, right – there's sort of Bannonite and then Kushnerite, and Cohn and Dina Powell fall into that camp – that camp is not doing so great.

MR. SCHWARTZ: So who is he close to? Who does Trump really listen to? Who does he like to talk to in the White House?

MS. HABERMAN: (Laughs.) Himself. (Laughter.) Twitter. No, I mean, look, he's obviously very close to his daughter. Talks to his daughter a lot. He's really close with Keith Schiller. I mean, Keith is really sort of the underexamined force here. But Keith Schiller, who was Trump's personal body-man turned White House assistant. He's also most known now as the person who delivered the James Comey dismissal letter to an empty FBI office a couple of weeks ago – or FBI headquarters, because James Comey was in California. Keith has been with him for many, many years. He's a former cop for the New York Police Department.

And he has Trump's best interests at heart. And that's really all he cares about. And Trump – you know, he's Trump's sounding board on almost everything now. And he's – you know, Trump – one of the things that I've heard over and over again from people who really care about the president, who are close to him, is how lonely he is in the White House. Not that he's isolated, because there's people around all the time and they've started having these dinners at night to keep his television time down, among other things. But he's lonely.

And Keith is, I think, one of the people who provides some sense of emotional sustenance. So is Hope Hicks, who was his spokesman – woman on the campaign and who's at the White House now. So is Omarosa, you know, star of season one “Apprentice,” who is very close with him, again. And I think this is part of why a lot of his aides – not all of them – but a lot of his aides are looking forward to having Melania Trump move, because he tends to be calmer when she's around. Not constantly, but enough.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, that was what I was just about to ask you as you were running through that list. Is she one of those that keeps him from being lonely? I mean –

MS. HABERMAN: I think that, for whatever reason, she has a very soothing approach with him – not all the time. You know, you can never obviously look inside someone's

marriage. But he trusts her word on staff hires. He was not tweeting like crazy when he was on the foreign trip and she was with him. Remember, he's kind of a homebody. And so this is somebody who would fly home almost every night on the campaign trail to sleep in his own bed. And so I think being away from his wife and son has been – has been draining to him.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I guess the reason I brought that up is because of that picture on – that go so much play on social media.

MS. HABERMAN: The hand smack?

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yeah, the hand swat, you know? (Laughs.)

MS. HABERMAN: Well, like I said, I think you can never really peer into anybody else's marriage. And it's clearly complicated.

MR. SCHWARTZ: I'd be in big trouble if – I get swatted all the time. (Laughter.)

MS. HABERMAN: Oh, there you go. Good.

MR. SCHIEFFER: My wife would hit me with a hammer. (Laughter.)

MS. HABERMAN: OK, well, we'll make sure to put that – we'll put that on social media next.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Right.

MS. HABERMAN: But I think that – I think that they – look, we've all heard reports that there have been some strain between them with the presidency. I think she'd never wanted any of this. She, you know, does not like attention. Her disinterest in attention is often confused with shyness. She's not – she's not shy. She doesn't want attention. She's very focused on their son. There's a lot about this that I think that she finds uninteresting, she finds unappealing. She doesn't like people peering into her life. But I think that she has made her peace with moving. It would not have been her preference, I believe, but is doing it.

MR. SCHIEFFER: But do you think that's going to happen for sure? I mean, we've seen the reports about their son being enrolled in school and all.

MS. HABERMAN: I mean, I don't think – Bob, I don't think anyone should ever say for sure with Trump or any extended – any extension of Trump, anything attenuated. But as far as I understand it, that move is still on.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Maggie, do you think President Trump actually likes being president?

MS. HABERMAN: No. I think that he likes the – I think he likes parts of it. I think he likes – I think he likes living in that house. I think that he likes the plane, to some extent. I think

he – I think he likes, you know, the magnitude of the job. I think he likes the theoretical power of the job. I think the reality, which is that the president doesn't actually have as much power and he'd like to have, or as autocrats have or authoritarians have, bothers him.

And I think that he – I think that it's just – I think psychically – look, as Howard Stern – you know, noted psychiatrist Howard Stern but still, you know, he's known Trump a long time. And he had, I think, a pretty wise observation about Trump, that Trump was just not going to be able to handle sort of the emotional pounding of this, because – and the criticism. And it's a lot. And Trump really does not like criticism in general. And you know, he does not really have the ability to mentally tune out, you know, what is essentially a large comments section, right? He does – I mean, he's a series of conflicting and jumbled impulses and instincts.

So one of, I think, the things that people really struggle with is trying to pin him down as, oh, he's going to react X, Y, Z because – you know, this way to X, Y, Z. Well, sometimes he'll react a certain way to X, Y, Z, and then sometimes he'll react a different way. You know, sometimes he's got a plan, and that's why he's tweeting. And sometimes he's just tweeting because he's angry. And one of the most difficult things about covering him is that you're never really going to know exactly why he's doing something. My colleague – ex-colleague Ashley Parker, who's now at The Washington Post, and I used to talk about that a lot. You just are never going to entirely know what the – what the operating impulse is behind one of his actions.

One thing that I think is a frequent undercurrent is he's really lonely, he's really isolated. I think he genuinely believed that becoming president was going to be like joining some kind of a club. And instead, it's like, you know, he's living some permanent, you know, prom scene out of "Carrie," where, you know, everyone's pointing at him and laughing at him. And that looms really large for him. And I think he's having a hard time.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Do you think he – I mean, he feels cooped up physically?

MS. HABERMAN: Well, I know he feels cooped up because he – you know, he gave that really remarkable comment to I think was Reuters about how he loved his old life. And, you know, he was like, I can't drive anymore. I mean, he's not exactly a – you know, a daily commuter in a Toyota. Like, this is somebody who has never driven.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Right. He's a homebody, but he feels – he feels – even though he's a homebody he feels restricted.

MS. HABERMAN: He does. Well, he likes – control is very important for him. He has no control right now. And that's very hard for him.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, let's talk about what's ahead now. Where do you see this whole thing with the FBI director? I mean, we'll all be glued to the TV to see what he has to say when he testifies. How is – what's going on at the White House in connection with that right now?

MS. HABERMAN: Nothing great. You know, there's an enormous amount of anxiety.

Right now what you've got is Marc Kasowitz, Trump's personal lawyer for a long time, who is not familiar with Washington is leading up this team of – it's the legal team, but I think it's also basically going to be something of a rapid response team. They're trying to figure out, look, this is a White House that was not staffed to appropriate levels in the first place.

So to have this happening now, where you have to create this whole separate apparatus to respond just to a probe, has been daunting for them. I think that they are – I don't anticipate that the president is going to keep Comey from testifying, because I think they're aware that that would be very problematic to do for the president in terms of optics and in terms of credibility. But who knows with him? They could do anything. But, you know, they're certainly not looking forward to him testifying.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So what about the White House staff? Do you see more changes coming? I mean, I have to say, when they tried to explain how Comey was fired and why the president did it, that first go-round, I mean, it was like the Marx Brothers meet the Three Stooges or something. It was everything but Harpo honking that little horn.

MS. HABERMAN: Ouch.

MR. SCHIEFFER: What happens now on that?

MS. HABERMAN: Look, I think it's very problematic for the president that they gave so many different answers to why James Comey was fired, right? I mean, look, there are legitimate things to complain about with James Comey in terms of how he did his job, in terms of the way that he handled the email probe of Hillary Clinton during the campaign, about his, you know, breathtakingly unusual public disclosure at that – at that news conference that he had, talking about how she was extremely careless but would not be charged, about the letter he wrote Congress – although I think that was an understandable position why he did it.

I think that there were reasons that you could credibly get rid of him, but the timing of it was just so terrible that it was – it was bad for the president. And the fact that they couldn't come up with a consistent answer, to your point. You know, initially it was, oh, well, it was recommended by Rod Rosenstein, the deputy attorney general. Oh, then the president gives an interview and says actually it was because of the Russia probe. And it was because of the Russia probe. He was really frustrated. So that's where – that's where this finds itself.

And, look, I think that the events surrounding James Comey's dismissal are going to be key to this Mueller probe, perhaps less key to what you see the House and the Senate Intel Committees do, although it'll be key to that testimony. But I think this is going to be – the various answers that Trump and, to a lesser extent, Jared Kushner, about his own meetings with Russian officials, have given, the conflicts therein, the changed stories, those are going to be very problematic.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let me – since you brought up Kushner. I did not see Kushner or Ivanka yesterday in the Rose Garden. Were they there? Maybe I just didn't see them.

MS. HABERMAN: They were not. Kushner was supposedly at a previously scheduled meeting. Ivanka was observing a Jewish holiday. But, you know, I suspect that they were not sorry that they were not there.

MR. SCHWARTZ: I was going to say, was he skiing? (Laughter.)

MS. HABERMAN: Yes, he was on the ski slopes in Arlington, Virginia. (Laughter.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: But do you see any significance in that?

MS. HABERMAN: In their absence?

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yes.

MS. HABERMAN: Yeah, I do. I mean, I think that – you know, I think that – I think that both of them can make themselves available when they want to. They have certainly had other moments where they have – they have chosen not to observe either Shabbos or a holiday or whatever because there were – there were, you know, intervening events. I mean, this is – they don't – they lost. I mean, the evidence of their lack of ability to move him in a grand way was on huge display in the Rose Garden yesterday. And I think that that's very hard for them, because they've invested a lot of energy in letting people believe that they are going to be able to impact him somehow.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So, Maggie, will they be able to put this Russian thing behind them? At this point, it seems to me that they haven't. And they've really put it to the fore more than putting it to the background.

MS. HABERMAN: Yeah.

MR. SCHIEFFER: But is that possible for them to do that? And what will they have to do, if they do that?

MS. HABERMAN: I mean, I think they basically need Mueller to end the probe. Short of that, I don't – and the House Intel and Senate Intel Committees to end theirs. Short of that, I don't see where this goes, because, you know, they're – and, to be clear, the congressional inquiries have become very partisan. So, you know, there – it's understandable that there are complaints about how those are conducted. I don't – they will still continue. And partisan politics will be with us forever. Unless Mueller moves fast, and in moving fast says there's really no there there, I don't see how this ends quickly for them. And I think the president's inability to stop talking about it is his biggest problem.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Speaking of that, explain to me what is your feeling about the fact that these tweets come at these odd hours of the day. (Laughter.) I mean – you know, I mean, I'm older than Donald Trump, but he is 70 years old. And the idea of a 70-year-old man tweeting in the middle of the night – I don't understand how that is, or why that is. What do you think that's about?

MS. HABERMAN: (Laughs.) I mean, look, he did this during the campaign. So I think he thinks, you know this is just who I am. This is one of those moments where the gravity of being president hasn't quite sunk in for him, to put it mildly. You know, look, he likes it. I mean, I don't – it sounds like a ridiculous answer, but, like, usually the best answer is the simplest one. You know, he likes the idea that people are hanging on his words. The "covfefe" tweet the other night was a new level of strangeness, so I don't – I don't quite understand what happened there.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Have we figured out what that word means yet?

MS. HABERMAN: No. And according to Sean Spicer it's a very, very secret group of people who know, along with the president, which was one of the most laughable answers in a series of laughable answers that this press secretary has given.

MR. SCHWARTZ: It's like the secret code word on the decoder ring he found at the –

MS. HABERMAN: Right, exactly. They knew exactly what he meant. And it was on the – you know, it's on the box of Ovaltine. I don't – you know. But, look, I think that – I think, Bob, you are hitting on an important point, which is that there is a weirdness factor to that, that I think that people just can't understand, because it makes no sense. Why – I mean, forget about – forget about age, forget about any of that, just you're the president of the United States and it's 3:00 in the morning and you're tweeting about "covfefe." (Laughter.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: You know, but the other part, Maggie, is let's just forget about tweets. Why is he up at 3:00 in the morning? I mean, what is this a irregular sleep pattern that he has?

MS. HABERMAN: Well, he doesn't sleep. He doesn't – look, he doesn't – look, that I don't – that I cut him slack on. He doesn't – he's not a good sleeper. He never has been. So we've all been told. I mean, one other thing to bear in mind about him is he hates the idea that anyone considers himself a subject matter expert in him, who's not him. And he doesn't like when people are too personal talking about him. But that said, there are a lot of people around him who are more than happy to talk about what he's like, you know, behind closed doors.

You know, he's talked about over the years not needing much sleep, and that he doesn't sleep more than I think about four hours a night. I think that that bears out. I mean, I don't understand the sort of gaps in sleep, where it seems like he's probably been asleep, and then he wakes up. Although, I will tell you, having three children and not having slept through the night in more than 11 years, that, to me, is, like, the least of the things before us.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Do you suppose it has anything to do – does he take sleeping pills, for example, or something that might – because he seems to have an entirely different demeanor sometimes in these tweets than he does in different forms of communication.

MS. HABERMAN: I don't know what to attribute it to, but I do know that even during,

you know, normal daylight hours you can see his mood swing pretty dramatically from one event to another. So I don't know how much of it has to do with anything else.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Maggie, let me ask you this. I mean, you're covering a fascinating subject, who's involved with fascinating subject matter. The story every day is interesting. How much of your time do you spend trying to figure out who Donald Trump is personally, and what he does – you know, for instance, the images of Keith Schiller keeping him company versus, you know, more serious policy matters or matters related to the investigation?

MS. HABERMAN: I spend more time than I would care to, and that I imagine I ever would have had to with another president, with the possible exception of Bill Clinton, who also needed a mood decoder ring for certain portions of the day. But I spend more time than I would care to, devoted to what, you know, his aides very dismissively and aggravatedly describe as palace intrigue stories. But that's really not what it is. These are the stories of this presidency. And they are just all there on display for you.

I do think there is a sameness to it. And I think that – you know, with Trump there is just a never-ending cycle of who's up, who's down. Trump fosters that, because he has this habit when he speaks to one aide, he'll ask them, you know, what do you think of this other aide? And then he'll do the same with the other aide. What do you think of that other aide? And so people constantly – he likes the concept of having people be on edge and feel a little off kilter in his orbit. It's part of his management style. But I spend – I spend more time than I would care to, thinking about this.

However, I don't spend as much time as some of my colleagues who haven't covered him before do, right? I mean, like, I sort of get what the formula is. So less than – (laughs) – less than I might otherwise if I hadn't done this for the last year and a half.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Who really stands their ground? I mean, you talked about people standing their ground with him when he's yelling or when he's berating or when he's, you know, questioning someone's loyalty. You know, who's good at that, and how far can you actually take it? I mean, certainly people don't really need to work for him. They – you know, they don't need the job. They might not want the job. They might get frustrated and say, you know, to heck with this job. What's the fine line with him?

MS. HABERMAN: I mean, look, I think it just depends on who the person is. There are some people who he does not permit to talk back to him any meaningful way. There are some people who can. You know, it's funny, though. It isn't that people just tell him yes all the time. There are people telling him no. He just doesn't listen. So, you know, I don't – I don't think there is somebody who is, like, the ultimate swayer. There really isn't. I mean, when he's made up his mind that he's going to do something, he's going to do it. And it's really hard to talk him out of it. So I think that – I don't think that there is, like, this one – this one sort of focal point. I think there are people who have better luck on some days than others.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Maggie, as a reporter, have you ever covered a person or a story or a White House where there are so many people who are willing to talk?

MS. HABERMAN: No. I mean, this is shocking. And you know – and I’m sure you have a similar view, and you’ve been doing this much longer and much better than I have. I mean, certainly in – look, I mean, Rudy Giuliani’s city hall, Mike Bloomberg’s city hall, I covered both of those. I covered Hillary Clinton’s various campaigns. I covered the Obama campaign. Covered the McCain campaign. I’ve never seen something like this, where there is just no sense of where the line is and what is sacrosanct that you don’t leak out. And, like, I mean, people are just – people are so worried about how they are perceived, as opposed to sort of what is good for the administration.

And one of the things that’s funny is, you know, Jared Kushner has spent a lot of time saying to people, you know, people need to – there are a lot of people who have their own agendas and don’t have the agenda of the president. But Jared Kushner doesn’t have the agenda of the president, right? I mean, Jared Kushner wants all kinds of things that this president doesn’t agree with. So you have a lot of people who are posturing to make sure that their own coverage is fine. And that I’ve never seen anything like.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Maggie, I wanted to ask you about a poll that came out this week. This is a media poll that said – by the Huffington Post/YouGov, that said 83 percent of Trump voters believe the media’s hostile towards them. If you flip it to Hillary voters it’s – you know, 68 percent of Hillary voters say the media is an ally or friendly to people like them. What’s it like for you reporting for The New York Times in a climate like this?

MS. HABERMAN: It’s a more difficult climate than I’ve ever seen. I mean, look, I think that you can’t underestimate the degree to which social media has changed so much of this in terms of the views that people have of news outlets, that they have of individual reporters. You know, it’s – but it’s hard. I mean, I had to – we’re much more aware of it. You know, I know that there was a lot of sturm und drang about the getting rid of the public editor role at The New York Times. I mean –

MR. SCHWARTZ: Just this week.

MS. HABERMAN: Yeah. Twitter is a giant public editor. And so – and I think that – and I think that there is an enormous amount of criticism trained on us at all times. It’s not an easy – it’s not an easy world to do this in. It’s very different than it was even four years ago. And I don’t – I wish I had some more masterful way of describing it. I don’t. It’s just – it’s exhausting.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Does it make it more exciting as a reporter?

MS. HABERMAN: (Laughs.) I’m very tired. (Laughter.) So I think if I get a little more sleep – if I get a little more sleep, yes, then it’ll become exciting again.

MR. SCHIEFFER: It is. But it is elsewhere – I think it is a rougher world. And you and I have covered some pretty tough things. But I got a letter from a woman the other day, 77 years old, who called me a termite. And I’ve been called many things over the years, but termite is a

new one. (Laughs.) And every day and every way something new and different happens.

MS. HABERMAN: That's very special. That's a very specialized niche, a termite. Good. I've never – I've never actually envisioned us that way before.

MR. SCHWARTZ: It takes Bob, yes.

MS. HABERMAN: Sure.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I actually saved the letter. I mean, it was not even an email which, you know, you don't get that much snail mail anymore, like we used to. But I actually saved that.

MS. HABERMAN: That's very true.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, Maggie, it just an absolute pleasure to talk to you. And I will have to say, so I'm not being objective here, I'm a big fan. And you are doing a great job. And we all appreciate what you're doing there. So thanks for being us.

MS. HABERMAN: Well, thank you. I am a huge, very long-time fan of yours. Thank you for having me on. This was a treat.

MR. SCHIEFFER: (Laughs.) Well, thank you, Maggie.

And for Andrew Schwartz, this is Bob Schieffer. Thanks for listening.

(Music plays.)

(END)