

**THE 2018
EV ROGERS AWARD WINNER
KATHLEEN HALL
JAMIESON**

**HOW RUSSIAN HACKERS & TROLLS EXPLOITED THE
US MEDIA IN 2016**

An edited transcript of a lecture by Kathleen Hall Jamieson.

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THE EVERETT M. ROGERS AWARD

Everett M. Rogers was an influential communications scholar and teacher, and former associate dean and Walter H. Annenberg Professor of Communication at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. His *Diffusion of Innovations* is the second-most cited book in the social sciences. The Everett M. Rogers Award was established in 2005 by the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. The award honors an individual or collaborative team whose work contributes to greater understanding about the kinds of issues close to Everett Rogers' heart, including *Diffusion of Innovation*, *Communication & National Development*, *Historical & Social Evolution of IT*, *Cross-cultural Communication*, *Network Processes & Effects*, *Entertainment-Education*, and *The Discipline of Communication*. For more information on the award, please visit: www.rogersaward.org.

Watch the entire video of this conversation at: <https://youtu.be/gkynw2OjXbc>



KATHLEEN HALL JAMIESON is the Elizabeth Ware Packard Professor of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, the Walter and Leonore Director of the university's Annenberg Public Policy Center, and Program Director of the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands. Five of the 15 books that Jamieson has authored or co-authored have received a total of eight political science or communication book awards (*Packaging the Presidency*, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age*, *Spiral of Cynicism*, *Presidents Creating the Presidency*, and *The*

Obama Victory.) Jamieson has won university-wide teaching awards at each of the three universities at which she has taught and has delivered the American Political Science Association's Ithiel de Sola Poole Lecture, the National Communication Association's Arnold Lecture, and the NASEM Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education Henry and Bryna David Lecture. Jamieson's work has been funded by the FDA and the MacArthur, Ford, Carnegie, Pew, Robert Wood Johnson, Packard, and Annenberg Foundations. She is the co-founder of FactCheck.org and its subsidiary site, SciCheck, and director of The Sunnylands Constitution Project, which has produced more than 30 award-winning films on the Constitution for high school students. Jamieson is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Political and Social Science, and the International Communication Association, and a past president of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

HOW RUSSIAN HACKERS & TROLLS EXPLOITED THE 2016 ELECTION



Willow Bay: Hi, everyone. I'm Willow Bay, Dean of the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, and welcome to the 12th Everett M. Rogers Colloquium. I'm delighted to see all of you here in the room today and equally delighted to be welcoming those of you who are joining us on Facebook Live, so welcome to all of you.

We're here in Los Angeles at USC Annenberg, a global leader in education and scholarship in the fields of communication, journalism, public relations and public diplomacy, and we're thrilled to be sharing this day and presenting today's Rogers Award to a member of our extended Annenberg family. Kathleen Hall Jamieson is one of America's leading political communications scholars and an authority on rhetorical theory and criticism, campaign communication and the discourse of the presidency. And of course, Dr. Jamieson, Director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, is former Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, the premier communication program for research, teaching and service in the world.

In addition to sharing this proud heritage and the Annenberg name, I think we share a belief that this is an incredibly important and impactful moment to be a scholar, a teacher, a practitioner or a student in the field of communication, and we share a respect for the great privilege of being at these two Annenberg schools when communication, both

the field and its disciplines, is at the heart of our culture, our commerce and, yes, our politics like never before. I can't think of a more relevant or deserving scholar to win the 2018 Rogers Award. In a moment, we're going to hear more about Dr. Jamieson and her work from Marty Kaplan, the Director of the Annenberg's Norman Lear Center, who has administered the award since 2005.

But first, to give you a sense of who Ev Rogers was and why we pay tribute to him with this award, I'd like to introduce the Chair of the Rogers Award Jury, my Annenberg colleague, Peter Clarke. Peter?

(Applause)

Peter Clarke: The year is 1983 and I was into my second year as Dean of the Annenberg School when our faculty voted to appoint Ev Rogers to our ranks, enticing him here from Stanford. Ev was at that time the most cited scholar in communication, and in fact one of the most cited scholars in all of the social sciences: economics, political science, sociology, psychology. He was renowned for his work in the Diffusion of Innovations, of course. He became renowned for his work while he was here in the uses of entertainment education and social change. In fact, his principal works are cited today, many years after his death in 2004.

But I want you to know Ev Rogers for yet another quality as well. He was an educator. Immediately when he arrived at Annenberg, he came to me and begged to teach our largest population undergraduate course, and he did that brilliantly. He was a great personal friend. We miss him sorely, but I think you can see that there is no mystery as to why the Lear Center and the school collaborate in making this annual

award. He was an exceptional human being.

I want to now turn the microphone over to Marty Kaplan who will introduce this year's recipient. Marty?

(Applause)

Marty Kaplan: Thank you, Peter. Peter is the Chair of the jury that selects the Rogers Award winner. There are several members of the jury here with us today. Thank you all.

There's a tradition. You don't say the name of the person you're introducing until the end, but I'm going to break that tradition and mention her name now. Kathleen Hall Jamieson has held and holds titles in the Annenberg family. She was Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication, she holds the Annenberg Chair as a professor of communication and she directs the Annenberg Public Policy Center.

Her work spans lots of disciplines, and she's been honored in lots of fields: communication, political science, philosophy and no doubt I'm leaving out half a dozen others. She is the co-author or author of more than 100 works, and I'm just going to tell you the titles of three of my favorite of her books: *Unspun: Finding Facts in a World of Disinformation*, *Everything You Think You Knew about Politics and Why You're Wrong* and *Spiral of Cynicism: The Press and the Public Good*.

She's won every major award, has given every major named speech and lecture, but there's something about her that I just want to highlight as to why I am so thrilled the jury chose her. The Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism: why "for" and not "of?" The Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania:

why "for" and not "of?" Well, I have been told it may be apocryphal—please don't correct me if it's not true. Ambassador Annenberg insisted on that preposition because he wanted those schools to be advocates for something. Yes, teaching and scholarship and, yes, advocacy for learning and education, but also for communication and journalism as fields that will make a difference to society, that welds the concrete and practical to teaching and scholarship and learning. That's what Ev Rogers's career was about, and that's why it's so appropriate that she honors us today.

Just a few of the ways in which she does that, she's a public intellectual. In some circles, that's not a good thing to be. I am so thrilled that she is because she is in the media, on television, in print all the time holding politicians and their advertising accountable. That's a great service to democracy that she's providing. She founded FactCheck.org and other fact checking entities whose purpose is to hold up to scrutiny the discourse of contemporary politics. She creates tools. In one year, she is the coeditor of both the *Oxford Handbook of Political Communication* and the *Oxford Handbook of the Science of Science Communication*, and handbook is the key word there. In both cases, it is to help practitioners understand what the best practices are. It's a practical guide.

The work she'll do today is applied research because it's implications for democracy and what we need to do about it are manifest. I'm thrilled that we work together on various projects with the Walter Cronkite Award, with work shortly in health communication and also in science communication, and so I'm going to ask the Jury Chair, Peter Clarke, and Dean Bay to join me here as we celebrate, honor and present the award and hear from—and this is about to be your cue—the winner of the 2018 Ev Rogers Award, Professor Kathleen Hall



Jamieson.

(Applause)

Kathleen Hall Jamieson: Thank you. It's beautiful and it's heavy. That is heavy. Thank you very much. It's an honor to be here to honor a distinguished scholar and to do so in the presence of so many colleagues and friends that I value. Walter Annenberg did indeed call the deans of his school and told us the school was going to change its name because he thought we'd gotten the preposition wrong at its founding, and the interpretation of the reasons are exactly on target.

I'm here in the tradition that was set up in Diffusion to talk about positive impact. Diffusion of Innovation, diffusion of information, the ways in which we can ensure that that was used to increase health and well-being, to say there's another kind of diffusion now, and we ought to be worried about it. I titled this talk something in the range of "How Our Media Were Exploited in Order to Enable the Russian Hacking and Troll Activities to Influence the Outcome of an Election" because I think we need to take the "for" in our title seriously and ask how the communication that we are engaging in right now may be increasing our susceptibility to a kind of diffusion that Ev Rogers understood well and his theory still explains, but that we want to interdict and not facilitate.

To help do this, I'd like to start with today's New York Times. When we woke up this morning and we picked up our iPads or in some cases we picked up our hardcopies of the New York Times, we saw an article that was at war with itself in its description of what happened in 2016 because the headline talks about "meddling," and the headline says, "State Department Was Granted \$120 Million to Fight Russian

Meddling. It Spent \$0," but inside that article is a metaphor with very different implications. In fact, you may not want to take it as metaphoric because there's the possibility that it is literally descriptive, and the word there that is operative is "virtual war," "engaged in a virtual war against the United States."

Now, the difference between meddling and war and the actions that you take in response are highly consequential. During the 2016 election, our government and those speaking for it, as well as our press, accepted meddling and interference as the dominant characterizations. They did not use the language of war, they did not use the language of attack and they did not use the language, "as the result of subversion and sabotage." In the process, the framing of that activity, both by our government and the people who spoke on behalf of it and our press, suggested that it was benign in some important ways. That linguistic characterization invited a framing that throughout the campaign affected the way we saw the hacked content that came into our media stream from stolen Democratic emails.

We didn't, of course, call them stolen Democratic emails. We instead characterized them as WikiLeaks and then forgot the origin. Because the Russians had effectively used WikiLeaks as an intermediary and we, not thinking war (we wouldn't be at war with WikiLeaks and WikiLeaks wouldn't be attacking us) did not have a frame around that to say, what happened to those Russians whom on October 7 our Department of Homeland Security and the Office of National Defense Intelligence had declared were in fact there. The linguistic framing mattered, and those of us who were in the "for" business should have been on the frontlines to say, "wait. If you're not comfortable characterizing it as, 'at war,' at least



indicate that it is not WikiLeaks that is responsible for this. You've got your origins wrong."

Underlying the assumption of the press coverage was also the assumption that somehow there was an entitlement to know all of the things that were in private channels, although they reframed the election to an asymmetrical field in which you only had disclosures about one side. Hypothetically ask, what if we had disclosed emails from Michael Flynn, Donald Trump Jr., Kellyanne Conway? You can fill in the rest and ask, what if we had some tax returns and medical records in addition? We didn't, but we lost track of the fact that we didn't because the framing had narrowed this into some kind of entitlement to access that of course seems consistent with meddling. There was, after all, no enemy state behind this. It was just WikiLeaks which, in other circumstances, had elicited praise by opening up access to things that many approved of.

Does the "for" in communication matter? Did it matter that the Ambassador changed our name from "of" to "for?" Yes, in both cases. The first answer to the question I would offer to you—how our media were exploited—is, the framing capacity of our media through decisions made by our government officials and our reporters took a stream of content that was interpreted in a way that increased the likelihood it would be accepted and accepted uncritically by an audience.

That frame also constrained Hillary Clinton's capacity to argue the Russians were behind it, and it inflected the debate about who was Putin's puppet. You remember the bizarre exchange in which Hillary Clinton, trying to put the Russian frame on this with no help from the press or from the government of Barack Obama, alleged that in fact what

we had was Putin's puppet standing across the stage from her, and Donald Trump said, "You're Putin's puppet." Now we had a cross-puppet set of accusations in a context in which we did not have a Russian origin frame. That context meant that fundamentally, if framing does everything our literature suggests it does, gave people a different context for viewing this election.

Let me answer the second part of the question because there's another Russian stream of influence. The first is the hacking, the stealing, the theft, the sabotage. The second is the troll activity. If you wanted to be a troll—and I would ask you now to please join me in being a Russian troll—and you wanted to ensure that you could insinuate your material into the United States system almost seamlessly, you would want platforms that think of themselves as platforms, not as media outlets, do not consider themselves as gatekeepers. And as a result, they do not consider that they may have any role in determining who's coming into this environment to reach anyone—and then, in addition, have anonymized practices that increase the likelihood that you can hide behind false identities and are very effective at sustaining our engagement online as they continue to push us toward more like-minded content that becomes progressively more extreme.

How did that structure of social media come into our system and essentially create an open invitation to engage in electoral sabotage? They were all but ready-made for it. I don't mean to suggest the social media platforms are not made for many more wonderful things, but that those sets of capacities can be perniciously used and were.

We learned from the Mueller Indictment of the 13 Russian individuals and the one individual, I believe from California,

who was selling identities, how easy it was to come into this system and pretend to be someone else. As we heard from people who were “unwitting,” that’s Mueller’s word, in their engagement with these individuals, what we see is the ease with which they could counterfeit identities in order to mask the fact that they were not actually in a like-minded community, but were manipulating those communities to do things that the communication field has understood for decades, among them, re-weighting the communication environment in ways that would increase the likelihood that the disparity in amounts of communication would weigh on behalf of one candidate rather than another.

Now we have them using agenda setting by putting the content in—that’s the hacking content as well as the content from the trolls—framing, with the complicity of the US media structure, and also increasing the likelihood that get a misbalance in information. I’m going to argue you see this across the campaign.

My answer is twofold to how were we exploited. We had media platforms ripe for exploitation. We had a press structure uniquely susceptible to framing because the underlying structure of media coverage in this country is towards appearance versus reality, the assumption that we don’t see what we actually get in governance and in campaigning. As a result, they were uniquely disposed to think that there was newsworthy content inside the hacked emails because, after all, they were private now made public. The assumption of the move from public to private was a presumption of newsworthiness instead of a questioning of whether something was newsworthy.

They seemed remarkably unaware that in the process they

created a one-sided frame, anti-Clinton, without ever counterbalancing with information about Trump, thereby creating a more balanced frame. Information from the Clinton Foundation did not generate stories with parallel stories embedded that compared the Trump Foundation to the Clinton Foundation on exactly those same dimensions.

What then happened during the campaign? I’m now going to try to do a quick analysis, and I’m going to assume when I press this something good is going to happen because slides are going to appear on the screen. All right. I’m going to say they had a sound theory of the election. I’m going to say they affected the press agenda. The shifts in opinion and vote preference were consistent with their activities. Making that causal link is highly problematic and very difficult to do, but at least we know that there was a consistent move and the consistency is in the direction of the Russian activities, not against it.

It’s important to note that there is no evidence anywhere in 2016 that the Russians were being affectively unmasked because that was not coming into our media stream unhacked. It was a front and it was not coming into the media stream on social media and there was no counter stream trying to blunt their effect. My theory is going to be, if they did something, it was going to be in Trump’s direction. There’s no evidence they created a backlash against him. But their theory of the election was sound. If it weren’t, it wouldn’t matter.

First, they did things like this in the media environment. You just said there’s this noise, and it just creates all kinds of affect and we didn’t know where it came from, but knew it was bad. That was strategically set in order to create your anxiety, as we talked about, creating anxiety about cultural



change. They targeted voters they needed to target, that's Evangelicals and veterans to mobilize, black voters and Sanders voters to demobilize and they needed to shift the Stein supporters.

We're going to first take a look at cultural change. This is a really interesting study. I'm just going to telegraph it. Those who feel that the culture is moving against them were more likely to vote for Donald Trump. If you say, what is the underlying psychological move of the efforts to get individuals on both sides of some debate to create moments that exacerbate tensions, it's this. It harnesses that in a way that ultimately will aggregate up those audiences to incentivize them on Election Day to vote for Donald Trump. Their underlying psychological theory was sound. This is the kind of thing that they did, fears of cultural change. I'm going to move rapidly because I know that you can process the visuals very quickly.

Part of the reason that that is important is that increases their power. It decreases the likelihood that you will spot the Russian linguistic cues that say you are other including the absence of the indefinite article, some very strange uses of punctuation and an occasional statement that makes no constitutional sense whatsoever. But if you understand, as Larry Gross did when he pioneered the area of understanding visual imaging long before most of you were born, this is highly problematic content when it is being used deceptively.

Now, you see the tensions inside the culture, and the people who say this means they weren't trying to elect Donald Trump misunderstand something profound. To the extent that the incumbent is a Democrat, to the extent that the incumbent's heir apparent is the Democratic nominee, if you raise

cultural tensions around the status quo, you are creating an environment set to vote against that individual who is the Democratic nominee.

They targeted the voters they needed to mobilize. If they got their psychological theories right but they didn't reach the right person, they're not going to have an effect, but their theory of the election was sound. Evangelicals, and the move here is to start with benign content, use the links to aggregate the audience and as you continue to appeal to the audience you've now identified, move to more extreme content. As you're "liking," I'm beginning to aggregate you into the susceptible audience I will target with a massive push to vote on Election Day and during the early voting period.

You're picking up Catholics, by the way, with the telegraphic signal of the Catholic Medal on the bottom. Conservative Catholics are part of this broader group. Now the Medal has gone upper screen left. Here you go with veterans. Now we've moved to being explicit about Hillary Clinton. I'm downstream in this stream because I don't have time to be upstream.

Same move, but now to demobilize. I need audio if I get it, please. If not, this is an actress. Thank you.

One of the troll moves, and a powerful move, was to take content already inside the US media stream and amplify it. Another was to take content inside the media stream and distort it, but in the process there's a credibility because you have already recognized it inside the culture. You've seen this in other places, and so you're not likely to think that it's being increased in the weighting you give it because you're getting more exposure. This is produced inside the US system with

legally gotten campaign dollars legally spent, but the trolls are going to amplify it and push it to get it more exposure. You're also going to see things like this. Now, I'm downstream on this.

There is a synergy with the hacking stream and the troll stream. As you'll recall, the first major push into the Democratic system with hacked content was right before the Democratic Convention. It was an appeal to Bernie Sanders supporters with content stolen from Democratic sources inside the DNC that showed that Hillary Clinton's folks had their finger on the scale. That led to the resignation of Debbie Wasserman Schultz among other things. Those who say the trolls didn't create an effect, Debbie Wasserman Schultz would like to disagree with you.

Also, there was a move to shift voters who would, if they vote, vote on the liberal side for Hillary Clinton over to Jill Stein, and it's with appeals like this, "Trust me. It's not a wasted vote. The only way to take our country back is to stop voting for the corporations and banks that own us.' #GrowaSpineVoteJillStein." That's amplifying themes that are already out there, but this is troll-based amplification.

What we had first is they had the right psychological theory. The messaging was consistent with the theory. Create a backdrop of cultural turmoil, exacerbate your fears in the constituent audience, then begin to harness those in the direction of a vote against Hillary Clinton. This is much more an appeal against Clinton than in favor of Trump, which draws on all the literature that we have over the past 50 years which says that negative information is more powerful, it's more quickly processed, it's more deeply processed, it's more quickly retrieved and it is more persuasive.

They then affected the press agenda. I'm going to suggest briefly they affected the agenda around the Democratic National Convention, and that was largely a move to get the disaffected Sanders supporters to stay home. They affected it before the second debate. This occurred when the Access Hollywood tape appears, and within an hour, the dump of the Podesta emails blunts its effect on the agenda stream. They affected it through the month of October as the hacked content began to be placed across the news spectrum with a clever leaking strategy that ensured there was always something new. Remember, we don't have a Russian identification behind it; it's just WikiLeaks. It affected during the two debates, the last two debates, where two questions drawn by hacked content created a strong anti-Clinton frame. Finally, it may have affected it during the last 11 days. Here the evidence is the weakest that I have. We will know more as more information becomes available.

Let's start with the first. It's really simple. As a result of evidence from the hacked content, Debbie Wasserman Schultz resigned. That puts Donna Brazile in charge of the DNC. When the leaked content then later shows that Donna Brazil shared a debate question during the primaries, that fact was amplified by Donald Trump and by the trolls, and Donna Brazile loses her on-air job on ABC News.

Now you have the second personnel effect that had discourse consequences within the media stream. An articulate African-American woman's voice is taken out of the media stream, and Donald Trump was handed a meme, which is they're colluding with the media. The Democrats are getting content to Hillary Clinton. The media's doing that, and you have a whole stream of content, reinforced by the conservative media and sites such as Breitbart, saying that—



and now we draw out of more hacked streams—you see, they had this dinner that some media people came to, and now we're beginning to deepen the arguments that are already native to the right that the media are left-wing. You cannot trust them. That is a helpful line of argument to reinforce in case the media do decide to disclose that the Russians are behind that. Oh, wait a minute, they didn't. But none the less, it was preemptively important just in case.

Affected the news agenda before the second presidential debate.

OK? Imagine that on that day the Access Hollywood tape, which was released on the 7th, was the dominant theme in side news with no hacked content to counterbalance. I tell you what the frame would've been because there's a third thing at play that day, and it speaks to my opening theme. At the beginning of that day, the Department Of Homeland Security and the Office of National Defense Intelligence put out its report saying the hacking was attributable to the Russians. Had there been no Access Hollywood tape, that would've dominated the Sunday news shows, and the question would've been, how do you know that? Is this just an Obama finding? We would've actually spent some time talking about how they know what they know, and that probably would've continued for at least a day or two as Republicans fought back against that frame, thereby increasing the likelihood we were aware that that finding was there. But that disappeared completely on the Sunday shows. None of the people responsible for that report were even interviewed on the Sunday shows.

Instead the Access Hollywood material moves out through the Washington Post. Within an hour and 10 minutes, the

hacked content from the Podesta emails is dropped, and now instead of a Sunday frame that would've dramatically advantaged Clinton, here's this new report that says the Russians are behind the hacking and here's the Access Hollywood tape. Now we have here's the Access Hollywood tape counterbalanced by revelations about Clinton.

That reframing process is the single most important effect achieved by the hackers to that point in the campaign because had the frame stayed around Trump and not become counterbalanced with high levels of attention on it the day of the second debate—the debate happens that night—you would've expected, as a result, to have a strong, clear framing effect that would've lasted around the other hacked content as news evoked that frame to the content. The first part of the effect is creating a counterbalance narrative. We have revelations about both, so if you don't like both, OK, you still don't like both, but now we're not going to re-weight that to you dislike Trump more. But alternatively, it is doing something else. It is displacing the structural frame that could've contextualized the rest of the WikiLeaks content and never did. It's just starting to now, but it never did during the campaign. There's another effect.

Now first, there is no good answer to this question. Which one would you like to have? But if there's one, it should be crackdown rather than kiss up, and the implication of the section they just showed was that she is in one category rather than the other. It is the one that disadvantages her. This is the public/private frame, and then within it here's the contradiction, and this is the Bernie Sanders frame from the primaries. As a result, if you're thinking about which voters are receptive to this, those are the Bernie voters who need to be demobilized if Trump is to win the election.

The agenda was set through the month of October. Access Hollywood gets its hit, but Wiki Leaks stays there the whole time. Agenda setting in the last two debates, this is from the hacked content.

Now notice, WikiLeaks released. There are no Russians there. Public versus private. She wanted to keep them hidden. Then there is the quote that is being taken out of its context, and this came through the open debates process by which citizens supposedly voted that question into the queue for Martha Raddatz. Those of you who are studying bots, I would really like to know how many bots voted for that question, and I would really like to know how many trolls increased the likelihood that those inside our system cast a vote in that direction by telling others, we've got this open debate process. Push that question to the top. Anybody who's got the answer to that please let me know. I am more than curious. If you know that what bots are able to do is surge a site in order to create the illusion of liking in very quick time, and, as a result, increase the likelihood through a normative pressure that we come into the stream and say, I like too and that we share too, this is at least a plausible hypothesis. It is the way the trolled content moved. It would be unsurprising if that effect were there. I hope someone looks at it to see whether it is. I have a pretty strong suspicion that this is a really good hypothesis.

But the other thing that you're hearing here is the presumption of this is a frame, and the frame is difference between public and private that is consistent with the way press frames our politics. I wrote a book with Joe Cappella called *Spiral of Cynicism: The Press and the Public Good*. In that book, we argue that the press so strongly adopts a tactical/strategic frame and appearance versus reality frame that it only has to

be activated. You don't have to create it from scratch. Once it's been activated, it is so strong a frame that it influences the perception of content that has nothing to do with the news that has been framed that way.

Specifically, we looked at actual news from the mayoral election in Philadelphia. We did studies across cities across the United States. We took out anyone who knew who won. We also took out those who thought that Rizzo had won. The person who had won was Ed Rendell. But we had an actual situation as a result where there was real news coverage which we used in one condition. In the other conditions, we used the same reporter and on air individuals from WPVI, Walter Annenberg's former station, who actually re-created the news pieces for us in the same suits and ties against the same background, a really tightly controlled message stream, in other words.

What we found was this tactical, strategic frame which looks at how you appear to be something to try to persuade people to do something and how the polls matter in assessing whether or not that's the case, activated cynicism, depressed learning. When they were given a debate by the actual candidates featured in the actual news, they were more likely to say things such as, that candidate won't do what the candidate actually says he will do. Since Ed Rendell was elected mayor, we actually know whether he did what he said he would do. He did. As a result, you can't say that that was realism, not cynicism. In the case of that election, it was realism. He actually made promises he kept. Actually most of the time, most people try to keep the promises they make.

There's surprisingly little turnabout from what you promise in campaigns and what you do in governance. You tend not



to be elected when you make those kinds of shifts. There's a schema out there, and we know from the framing literature that the likelihood that you're going to get persuasion affects increases when the content is consistent with an existing schema. The press has been feeding that schema. It is embodying it here. The likelihood that that produces affects is high.

But there's one other thing that's important here. They have just digested a Clinton statement to take it out of context. In that debate, when Hillary Clinton explains that she was talking about the Steven Spielberg film in which an important president of the United States navigated us through the Civil War by talking to different constituencies in ways that let them find some ground they could agree to, when she says that it sounds as if she's just looking for some excuse because the press has never said, here's the whole quote to show that the next line in her hacked, leaked, stolen speech segment is actually about Abraham Lincoln and about Steven Spielberg. In the absence of that context, this creates the frame. It looks in the debate as if Hillary Clinton is just trying to get out of a difficult situation. She's talking about Lincoln? You got to be kidding. Now we've got Clinton looks as if, in the debate, that she is verifying the notion that you can't really trust her. See how sleazy she is as she maneuvers around to reinterpret that content? Trump, of course, is, Lincoln? You're a liar.

Hillary Clinton is overstepping the statement made the 7th by the intelligence community. They did not attribute this to Putin. They attributed it to Russians. They wouldn't attribute it to Putin until later in the cycle outside the election itself, and those statements themselves are also carefully couched. Nonetheless, she's got the gist of it right, and there's no news frame into which you are going to put this. This, for most

people the night of that debate, is brand-new information, very difficult to process because there's no underlying schema through which it processes, and it, as a result, lacks the credibility it would have had it been certified by news across the ideological spectrum. Had that been the dominant news of the day, you would've heard about that across the spectrum, but it wasn't because of Access Hollywood and then the Podesta email dumps.

This is the next place in which we've got a problem. This is a speech to a bank, so we at least have bankers. There's the date. This is a hacked segment, a segment that comes from the hacking. You see the period there? That's Face the Nation. The statement says, "My dream is a hemispheric common market, with open trade and open borders, sometime in the future, period." There was no period in the segment, there was another clause. How did the media become accomplices in letting the Russians do their work?

This is either bad reporting or someone, because of the brevity of news spaces, not knowing where an ellipsis is appropriate and not understanding what the second clause meant and its implications for the debate about open borders because open borders is, for Donald Trump, a word that defines his candidacy. For Donald Trump, it means immigration, it means trade and it means everything that is scary. For Donald Trump, what it doesn't mean is infectious diseases crossing borders and it doesn't mean cross-border energy transfer. So you will be surprised to learn that that's what Clinton was talking about in the rest of that statement. Well, there are the ellipses, but you don't know what's missing in the ellipses. ABC got the whole sentence.

Now, this one isn't hard. This one isn't like Lincoln where you

have to go to a next sentence. This is the same sentence. “My dream is a hemispheric common market, with open trade and open borders, sometime in the future with energy that is as green and sustainable as we can get it, powering growth and opportunity for every person in the hemisphere.” When we look at every other segment that is in the download, the dump from WikiLeaks that was Russian stolen content from the Podesta email stream, what we find is that when Hillary Clinton uses this concept, it is either like this about cross border energy transfer or it is about infectious diseases. There are those ellipses.

Now, the news framing the day of the debate is now creating the sense that that’s what this was. Imagine in the debate that Hillary Clinton is now going to say, no, I was talking about cross-border energy transfer. You’re going to say, oh, really? There it is again. The reason I’m walking across the Sunday shows is to say this was not simply Fox News. Actually, Fox News put ellipses in when there are some periods in there that shouldn’t have been in there. But here’s the debate.

(Video Plays) “In a speech you gave to a Brazilian bank, for which you are paid \$225,000, we’ve learned from the WikiLeaks that you said this, and I want to quote, ‘My dream is a hemispheric common market, with open trade and open borders.’ So is that your dream, open borders?” “Well, if you went on to read the rest of the sentence, I was talking about energy. We trade more energy with our neighbors than we trade with the rest of the world combined, and I do want us to have an electric grid, an energy system that crosses borders. I think that would be a great benefit to us. But you are very clearly quoting from WikiLeaks, and what’s really important about WikiLeaks is that the Russian government has engaged in espionage against Americans...”

Now, there’s no Russian [unintelligible], no frame back there. There’s no espionage back there. Hillary Clinton’s trying to put it in fresh in the middle of a debate after she’s just told you that she’s said something you have no evidence she’s said from any of your exposure to the news stream that day. How plausible is that?

Hillary Clinton was not talking about immigration, but you’re not anchored anywhere on that, including from the moderator of the debate. This is bad journalism. How did the Russians manage to exploit and increase the likelihood that Donald Trump would be advantaged? Because we had a press that wasn’t doing its job, at least in this instance.

Amplification by the trolls. The synergistic relationship between hacking and trolls is profound. One of the things that the trolls did was magnified anything that would help Trump, magnified anything that would hurt Clinton and, in the process, increase the likelihood that those in their stream of influence would see that unweighted environment. One of the reasons that this is important—and now let me go back to the beginning of the lecture—is that if you look at the polling data in summer after the attacking of a Gold Star family by Donald Trump, what you find is that veterans appear unlikely to vote the way you expect them to vote if they go into the voting booth. Now, they aren’t going to come in in large numbers and vote for the Democrat. They’re likely to stay home if they’re unhappy about their candidate. But the military families are nowhere near the percent that Trump needs them to be.

You also find that the evangelical, Protestant Christians are not anywhere near where you need them to be if you’re the Republican nominee. There is a reason for that. You have



a thrice married candidate with sexual commentary that's highly explicit that has now been made fairly visible in the middle of the campaign, who has engaged in some fairly explicit kinds of talk on Howard Stern, a place you probably don't think you'd like your children to listen to. Need I go on? In case we haven't mentioned enough about the veterans, this is a person who had multiple deferments for, among other things, transient bone spurs. So there are cues out there that are making it harder for those segments of the population to vote.

If you re-weight the environment so that Hillary Clinton is so awful that you will cast the default vote because you're not getting the weighting up on those things, our theories would say you're going to increase, at least on the margins, the likelihood that those people mobilize up. If they mobilize to their historic proportions, Trump is now within shooting distance of winning in the election, and it's going to come back down to the late deciders.

Let's look at the last days of the election. In the last days of the election, we had the reopening of the Comey investigation. Now, it's different to say it was reopened than to say we knew it was reopened. At the point at which he sends a letter to Congress, you know it will leak. At the point at which it leaks, you've got press coverage, and now we're back into something the press loves to do: speculate about what could be known under circumstances that, if you just wait long enough, will be known. As a result, that controversy—what is there; what does it mean—with all the attendant priming of the word “emails,” which does not help Hillary Clinton because she's got email server controversy sitting in her backdrop, comes into play.

As a result, a reasonable theory is, in those days, that's where Clinton lost the late deciders. The late deciders split decidedly for Trump in the close states, and the three close states decided the election in particular. High levels of late deciders, and they split decisively toward Trump. What's in the media signal at this point? The debates are over. It's the Comey investigation, and during that period of time, there is no ostensibly new hacked information, so there goes my hacking theory. The trolls were still doing what the trolls were doing, but they should've been producing their effects all along. Even as, by the way, early voters are voting during in this period and the hacking is having its effect, so there's some early voting effect before you get to the last days, but the big vote is going to be on election day. So how do I get the Russians into this last period? If I don't, maybe you say, well, you know, there's no plausible theory here because I can't nail down the late deciders.

Here's the story. First, you've got the scandal. It's creating agenda setting effect. The framing is against Clinton, but where are the Russians? Here are the Russians. If Comey put the statement out to the Congress, feeling the need to let them know that he reopened the investigation, and also possibly made the statement in summer about the investigation of the Clinton server, a statement which, by historical markers, is a strange statement, a statement he would ordinarily not have been expected to have made, because he believed Russian disinformation that said that Loretta Lynch had basically made some kind of a deal with the Clinton campaign not to prosecute, then in the last days we potentially have an influence of Russian disinformation that was forged, not hacked, from an actual stream.

If it turns out that that influenced Comey, then the case for



electoral impact of the election on the Russians becomes much closer to a highly convincing case. We don't yet know exactly that that occurred, but the Washington Post story certainly suggests it. Comey is writing a book. I only wish it would be out before mine has to go to press. Whether there is that last shift for that reason, I'm just going to put an asterisk on. If that occurred, then I can tell you the case becomes substantially stronger. If it didn't, it's historically interesting that it might have been possible. To be continued.

Nonetheless, what that reopened investigation did was shifted the amount of "scandal coverage" against Clinton. Now you've got your agenda setting effect, and what happens with the electorate on the backend is consistent with what the trolls have done. That doesn't mean I think they're the only player in the stream. They certainly are not. The Trump campaign was trying to do exactly the same thing as were those who were advocating on his side. The question is, in a close election, could the incrementing up to make the difference have been that activity?

We have a history of studying communication, and we know these things reliably about it. When it produces effects, on average they are small. They are not large. When they are produced, they are short-term, not long-term unless they are reinforced. That is why I'm focusing on October because our best information about decay says you've got fairly rapid decay of communication signals that aren't reinforced. That graph I showed you where it's up there is what I would call a reinforcement. That troll amplification that is constant is reinforcement. As a result, it's plausible to say that even though we don't think we get big media affects most of the time, even though they are short term most of the time, the window in which they could occur was such that it's now

plausible that they did occur in this election.

Black turnout fell. White turnout went up. This is census data. If you look at the baseline of the Stein vote from the previous election—the advantage being that she's a control; she's the candidate in both—what you see is there is a difference between the Stein vote then and now. Maybe those are other factors. We don't know this, but the shift is in the direction of hurting Hillary Clinton and benefiting Donald Trump as a result. You also see that veterans and Evangelicals mobilized to their traditional Democratic/Republican level. That means the proportion was where it has been on its historical average. It wasn't before. Maybe they would've come home anyway. We don't know, but we do know that there was a boosting of the likelihood in the communication stream, assuming the targeting was well done. We still don't have exact information on the targeting to know that was the case.

I've argued that our concept of diffusion now needs to accommodate the changing structures of media platforms that facilitate some kinds of movement of attitudes and opinions and information that can play games inside the body politic because of well-worn communication theories that suggest agenda setting, framing, priming and the reweighting of evidence matter. At the same time, the spiral of silence theory suggests—and there's one large-scale Facebook experiment that suggests it as well—that when you get this ramped up enough that you think your community is on one side, you do engage in more communication. The implication is that others still fall silent. That engage in more is a more reliable finding than the fall silent finding, but nonetheless, it sits there.

In that environment, we need to ask, in the tradition of Ev



Rogers, what kind of scholarship do we need to understand not simply how we defuse what is good, the innovation and the information that helps save lives through help, but how do we theorize, understand and then protect ourselves from the more pernicious uses. I'd be happy to take comments or questions, and I know some of you have to go to class.

(Applause)

Thank you. Anybody?

Audience Member: If the Russians were so good at gaming our system, what's your theory on how they got to know our system so well?

Kathleen Hall Jamieson: I've read an exercise that said, how would you figure out, by using publicly accessible sources, which audiences to target? I pretended all I knew was how to search the Internet and that I was fluent in English, both problematic assumptions, so I may have been a little bit slow. What I found within about 4 to 5 minutes was that I could get enough punditry aggregated because of the tactical and strategic framing of news to be told not only which constituencies need to be mobilized, which need to be demobilized, but where I could find them, what had already been done to them, how Trump was trying to manipulate them, how Clinton was trying to counteract them. You don't need collusion to know that. Essentially, that is public, and it is a weakness of our system that we spend so much time on it that the answer to your question can be just pay a little attention to a news stream, and you're going to know it.

The second answer to the question is that built into the structure of our platforms are ways of reaching audiences

that are so much better than anything a sophisticated media targeter could do before this. You had to pay people to buy time because they knew how to reach target audiences by their time buys. You don't have to do this anymore. Make a list of all the ways you can target—and these are public ways; again, you don't have to collude to know this—you can target and you can target in ways that will reach these constituencies because the media are already telling you what they look like.

They're telling you these are older, these are white, these are, these are, these are, and these are the cities and places. You can target by geography. You can target by ideology. You can target by education. You can target by age. You can target by all the like-minded signals you give inside the consumer stream. All you have to go is into the existing publicly available structure and say you want to buy something, and you are suddenly given state-of-the-art strategic access to the best available targeting, better than anything a human could have done on his or her own before this.

The only question then is, was that incremented up through additional sources of information? There you've got the question of was there coordination, but you didn't need it to get to this part of the analysis. This you could get out of public sources. For two reasons, the accessibility of the information on the platforms and an all but how-to guide on how to do it well, and then the platforms give you the feedback on effectiveness.

In the past, you'd put your media out there and you'd kind of wait to see how the votes shifted or the poles shifted. Now, you've got an immediate sense because you know what's liked and what's shared, so it's as if we created a way to test



messages for people who know nothing about our system so that across time they could refine those messages in order to ensure that when they needed to surge into the system with appeals to activate, they had the right people, and they were inadvertently activating anybody who would vote against their side.

If there are no other questions, I'm going to tell you stories about Larry Gross.

Audience Member: You give a good account of the flaws in the system that were easily available to be taken advantage of, the incompetence, in a real sense, of our media in falling into various traps. The Russian element here — it strikes me if you want to put it in historical perspective—we need to acknowledge the fact that we, in this case the United States, have been meddling, probably with less finesse, in elections around the world for decades.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson: Yes.

Audience Member: In fact, countries do it all the time, but the U.S. has, as I think you know, been doing it more than most and fairly openly. I mean, the Hondurans don't think it's a matter of Facebook and bots that are involved. I think that if you're going to do this, and I gather a book is coming out, I would be wary of falling into the easily available frame of the Russians as the villain behind the screen. As I think you've just illustrated, we were asking for it in a sense, and if you need a villain, you could also, as is happening nowadays, blame Facebook and Twitter and other companies that are happy to be profiting on this. CBS right here behind me, I think that Les Moonves pointed out that Trump may be bad for the country, but he's very good for CBS. There's a way

in which all of this was taking advantage of a profit system which was completely either ignorant of or callous in not thinking about the consequences of the platforms they were making available.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson: Yes. I agree with the vulnerabilities in the platforms, and the extent to which the platforms downplayed this initially is really troubling. Because if they actually only knew what they said they knew when they said these numbers were very low, gee, it took them an awful long time to get the other numbers. If they were covering it up, that's a problem too, but every piece of new information they have to disclose suggests wider penetration and reach and more sophistication than the initial dismissal.

On the larger point, not only has the United States meddled in other countries, it's increased the likelihood that leaders of other countries with whom we disagreed strongly met an untimely end. You have to go back across our history and say, no, we are not the virtuous group here that was victimized by the evil other, but here's the question, if we're so smart about doing that, how did we let it happen to us? This actually raises the question, were we in this domain of meddling in other countries or were we still off doing all the other things that we've historically been so dexterous at and only caught when the Church Commission revealed some of them to the shock of many people in the American public. I don't mean to suggest that I don't think that we have been doing other kinds of pernicious things, but rather that I worry that our level of pernicious activity is not high enough for us to be aware of how we could be used. Then I worry about the ethics of doing it in both places or multiple places.

Yes?



Audience Member: I attended a briefing last March at the NATO High Command where the Rego, Latvia NATO Security Center reported on findings that said the Russians were systematically doing this in Finland, the Netherlands, France, Germany, often with very specific intent. For example, in Germany, trying to decrease public support for their military more explicitly than trying to flip an election, so clearly it seems that they are engaged in a very systematic attempt, and if this doesn't become a NATO Article 5 violation and prompt some kind of response, it seems to me it undermines the very principle of the Western alliance.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson: Yes, and we are now more recently made aware of the extent to which there has been Russian troll activity inside our agri-streams, trying to increase skepticism about GMO's, actually genetically engineered products would be a better way to express it. We also have that, but it's that they are involved in the anti-vaccination movement and in trying to minimize the likelihood that public opinion accepts anthropogenic climate change.

This is not a one-front activity, and the reason that I like the war metaphor is because you then have to specify the war against whom about what with whom where. You suddenly start to say, it is not right here alone, and we were not the first to have an effect. But we are seeing, as it moves across different rations, different kinds of capacities are emerging, and we are also able to learn from them.

France managed to interdict this, in a way that the United States didn't, because it was aware of what happened in the United States. It also has a completely different structure, and it does not have a First Amendment. The French organization that's responsible for elections—we don't have anything

that's comparable—put out a statement when McConnell was hacked and basically said, anything that's false you're accountable for, media. Well, it effectively meant the fact of hacking was covered, but the content was not. We can't do that here. We have a First Amendment, and we have to cherish our First Amendment.

But we're suddenly able to see, if we can get the piece—and USC has led the way in some important instances here—we've got to have a global communication community that analyzes this in very specific context with the language capacity and also the capacity to share what we know about each other's use of technologies because the underlying technologies are common. Bots perform the way bots perform, and some of the best research that's been done on the US election has been coming out of other countries who are taking their capacity to understand, driving it through our system, in part to mine it, to help understand what's happening globally.

This is the time that having two Annenberg communication schools means that we have a special obligation to be working with each other as well as our global partners because this affects virtually everything that we do in the health area and in the political area. This school has been historically known as the tech leader in the field, so to come here and talk about the new technologies is, to me, to be in a one down position dramatically because you've got expertise here that I know I do not have access to. One of the reasons I wanted to bring this here, because this is still a work in progress, was to get any feedback that you've got about the assumptions underlying this might be faulty.

The question is about the 2018 elections. I am alarmed that we have not taken advantage, and that's the reason I started



with the story in today's paper. There's money available for us to be responding effectively that has not been spent. There is an agreement that now appears to be in place to get a block of it spent. It is almost too late to spend this, and I haven't dealt with the problem with not having effectively hardened our electoral systems.

There were either 21 or 39 systems hacked, 21, the official statement, 39, what is being said privately in some circles. That means that—and data was taken out of two of those systems that we know of, including materials that potentially could've created vulnerabilities that, as best we know, were not acted on, but apart from these communications streams, the best way to change the outcome of an election is to enter into the digital stream and alter the vote or mess up the registration process so dramatically that you don't know what it means.

You don't actually have to do that to create a problematic outcome, you just have to demonstrate that you could have done it or suggest that you did it in an environment in which people are highly distrustful of everything in government and do not trust each other. Now the Secretaries of State stand up and say we weren't, and you say, you're a Democrat. You're a Republican. Now, we are, first, not going to be addressing the problem the way we need to, but, secondly, we're not going to have a public that's going to believe us if we have. That is equally problematic, less in our area of expertise in this room, but nonetheless, something that we ought to worry about. Creating the illusion that you can't trust is sufficient, and I think they've demonstrated capacities to do that.

Some wise person said that Putin wins if he gets us to assume there is no such thing as the knowable, the fact, the truth and

as a result is able to set us into environments in which we can't deliberate. We cannot use the strength of our system of government to get the best possible outcomes, and my worry is that we are now seeing the capacity to do that. In 2018 if we haven't done more than we've done at this point, we may see what the next iteration looks like, with 2020 being a Bush v. Gore without a capacity to count chads and ballots because there will be only a digital stream, and we won't know what we've got.

With that, I'm going to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you, thank you for this wonderful award and thank you for being such good colleagues and friends.



