Building a Coalition of Makers

Conceptualizing the Relationship Between Race and Producerist Politics in Trump's Discourse

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Abstract

How was former U.S. President Donald Trump's rhetoric crafted to appeal to a public that cross-cut class, racial, and ethnic boundaries? Significant scholarship has addressed the prevalence of racism and xenophobia in Trump's language; nevertheless Trump was able to build a broad political coalition despite this derogatory speech. This article examines the ways in which Trump leverages producerist discourse by using race as a modality to construct a moral argument about the worthiness of the figure of the 'maker'—the entrepreneurial protagonist of his rhetoric. Using a discourse analytic framework, it highlights how Trump uses stance to indirectly racialize and gender the subjects of his talk. The aim of this article is twofold. First, furthering scholarship on racialization and colorblind racism, it offers a discourse-based method for analyzing how an explicitly racist and exclusionary discourse can be interpreted by audiences as an inclusive one. Second, building on scholarship on Trump's rhetoric, it shows how racialized, gendered, and anti-Semitic language is part of a discursive formation that makes the neoliberal ideal of producerism appealing to an expanding political coalition—paradoxically because it is a moralizing discourse that names outsiders. By analyzing stance-taking within discourses of *ressentiment*, it is possible to understand how racialized and gendered ideologies and anti-Semitism work together to simultaneously include and exclude non-White audiences.

Keywords: Producerism; Morality; Race; Gender; Neoliberalism; Discourse

Introduction: Producerist Revanchism and the Neoliberal Entrepreneurial Subject

Stepping out of her private jet to attend the January 6th Capitol insurrection in 2021, Texas real estate broker Jenna Ryan is emblematic of the subject Donald Trump portrays as sympathetic in his speeches. Ryan, an entrepreneur, broker, and radio host, claimed that she and the other Trump supporters present were 'working-class people,' and decried the 'communist takeover' that Democratic governance represented (Smith 2021). Although her economic position would situate her as upper-class, Ryan embodies the core attributes of the 'maker' Trump relentlessly lauded. A range of scholarship highlights the importance of the rhetorical figure of the producer in U.S. politics, in contrast to those who are the 'takers', or the undeserving (Glickman 1997; HoSang and Lowndes, 2019; Stock 2017).

Black feminist scholars in particular have long emphasized the cultural power of a portrayal of Black women and a racialized underclass as 'takers' (Collins 2002; Davis 1981; hooks 2000; Wynter 2003). This article argues that sympathy for a coalition of 'makers' is constructed through Trump's narration of a beleaguered neoliberal subject in his speeches. Trump's adoration of the entrepreneur draws on a long history of conservative populist and producerist rhetoric in the United States (Berlet 2012; Johnson 2020; Lee 2006). This subject takes risks; manages their own enterprise, whether betting on stocks or driving an Uber; resents globalization and rules that constrain profit; and doesn't rely on the state (Müeller 2019; Scholz 2012, 2016). Trump's speeches contrast this deserving 'maker' with an indirectly racialized and gendered host of 'takers' or the undeserving, which include racial and ethnic minorities, women, and immigrants, as well as the 'enablers', the 'elites' who sympathize with these groups.

Nevertheless, and although there is a considerable literature on the topic, this article does not focus on the production of a White masculine identity, nor a desire for assimilation into Whiteness (Lipsitz 1998; Roediger 1991). Rather, building on the work of anthropologist Stephan Palmié (2006), it conceptualizes race in the context of Trump's political discourse as non-corporative, as a set of symbols instead of a group into which one may become incorporated (see also Kim 1999; Sansone 2003). Drawing on sociolinguistic and anthropological scholarship on stance (Du Bois 2007), I show how this set of symbols can organize social alignments within talk such that race comes to signify being a 'maker' and producer. Attending to stance reveals how different figures within Trump speeches (coal miner, tech worker) are used to construct an addressee (maker) that is valorized along multiple racialized and gendered dimensions of difference, hence with the ability to appeal to audiences of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. This article defines the entrepreneurial subject in the context of Trump speeches as an imagined persona who relates to the world through identifications with status and *resentments* towards others.[1]

In "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom," Sylvia Wynter (2003) notes that U.S. producerism was always an ideology that drew a line between who was and was not human, vilifying indigenous people, Jews, and people of color (HoSang and Lowndes, 2016, Wylie 1942). These scripts can be traced from turn of the century anti-unionist, anti-public worker discourse through mid-century calls for segregation from Democratic candidate George Wallace to contemporary portrayals of undeserving 'welfare queens' (Johnson 2020).

> Producerist ideology posited not an opposition between workers and owners but a masculine, cross-class assemblage connecting factions of the elite with poor whites in cities and on the frontier in what Senator Thomas Hart Benton, a Democrat from Missouri, called "the productive and burthen bearing classes" in opposition to those cast as unproductive and threatening, including bankers and speculators, slaves, and indigenous people (HoSang and Lowndes, 2016, pp. 935-936).

Tapping into these deeply held sentiments about the deserving productivity of White men, in contrast to 'unproductive others', I argue that Trump's invectives represent a new iteration of producerism in two primary ways. First, decoupling 'class' from a pro-labor politics of redistribution and using 'class' as an empty signifier of status enables Trump to appeal to a broad range of people—from wage laborers to small business-owners and economic elites—who despite their divergent material class positions identify with the producer as an aspirational ideal. Second, by triangulating *resentments* separately against both 'undeserving others' and the elite 'enablers' (Democrats, globalists) who sympathize with them, both White and non-White audiences can read 'undeserving' others as a group that does not include them.

Trump's discourse, like Jenna Ryan's claims to 'working-class' identity above, conflate class and status in order to appeal to this broad coalition of 'makers.' Popular media often attributes the persuasiveness of Trump's discourse to class politics; however, much of his discourse is rooted in the mobilization of status distinctions, not class politics as determined by one's economic position (Cox 1948). In closely examining Trump's attention to status, this article shows how Trump offers audiences a map of a social landscape that depicts one's role within a given setting and hierarchy. In a November 26, 2019 rally in Sunrise, Florida, Trump reminded his base of the status distinctions that defined them:

> You're the smartest. They [Democrats] don't like to say that about you. Hey, I went to great colleges. You went to great schools or colleges, you people are successful as hell. They like to try and demean, always best, well, this and that. Let me tell you, we're winning, you're smarter, you're better-looking, you're sharper, and they call themselves elite. But if they're elite, then, we're the super-elite (Trump 2019b).

Being good-looking, smart, and having gone to 'good schools', as in the excerpts from Trump speeches like this, are discourses about status and moral character. Trump's supporters are even better-looking and smarter than the elites who try to 'demean' them. While relatively subtle within the overall description of performing an elite persona, the term 'demean' also invokes *ressentiments* towards this elite and primes listeners to align with Trump's emergent construction of his coalition of makers.

Bringing together scholarship in rhetoric, and sociological and anthropological writing on racialization and colorblind racism, this article offers a discourse-based method for analyzing how neoliberal producerism works to transform race into a category that can both exclude and include non-White persons. Writing about racial neoliberalism, David Theo Goldberg (2008) argues that concomitant to neoliberal economic privatization was what he terms the privatization of race—enabling the maintenance of racial exclusion in private spaces when affirmative action policies had limited their expression in public. Thus, Trump's language—associating class with status rather than labor, material conditions, and economic position—represents an important iteration of the phenomenon Goldberg describes. By tying race and class to performances of status specifically, Trump develops a powerful tool for including a broad class, racial, and ethnic spectrum of persons in his coalition of makers, while still constructing the desirability of being a maker in racialized terms. While a framing of class as status overtly separates class from economic position in specific instances when class is invoked, at the same time, implicitly, it constructs American economic life in racialized and gendered terms. Within the overall flow of Trump speeches, whenever Trump describes the 'enemy' of the coalition of makers, those figures and their actions all become a part of a racialized and gendered landscape of the 'undeserving' who are not makers. This discursive tactic is pervasive in all the Trump speeches included in this sample.

Anthropologists and scholars of racialization have documented the shift from explicitly racially discriminatory policies to increasingly covert forms of racial exclusion in neoliberalizing societies (Beliso-De Jesús and Pierre, 2019; Bonilla-Silva 2019, 2006; Gooding-Williams and Mills, 2014; Rana 2019; Rosa and Flores, 2017; Stokes and Melendez, 2003; Thomas and Clarke, 2013). Analyzing colorblind racism, and racism within the context of neoliberal power, scholars explain how White supremacy can both "[imagine] racial objects for domination while simultaneously denying racism exists" (Rana 2019, p. 109). As Jodi Melamed (2015) indicates, this means turning to liberal multiculturalism as well as overtly exclusionary discourses to understand how they assign worthiness to different modes of

being (Goldberg 2008; Mills 2008). This shift was also manifest in American political conservatism, as the post-Civil Rights Movement GOP began to refer to Democrats as the party of elites and 'undeserving rabble,' simultaneously racializing both elites and a middle class as White (Johnson 2020). Advancing a literature on racial neoliberalism, this article shows how Trump's language furthers a privatization of race by reconfiguring the meaning of the term 'class' itself. Cleaving economic position from a class-based expression of status, Trump generates a malleable category inclusive of persons from different racial and ethnic backgrounds—allowing Trump to extend indirect forms of racialization around national, ethnic, and other social boundaries used in his public rhetoric.

Given Trump's humiliating, cruel, and overtly racist statements (Bonikowski 2019; Finley and Esposito, 2019; Hall et al., 2016; Hodges 2019; McGranahan 2017; McIntosh and Mendoza-Denton, 2020; Mondon and Winter, 2018; Simmons 2018), much writing has focused on the role of Trump's discourse in entrenching social hierarchies (Lamont et al., 2017). Scholarship in rhetoric has also emphasized how Trump's often derogatory talk also becomes productive within a broader GOP populist narrative (Johnson 2020, Kelly 2019, 2020; Lee 2006; Terrill 2017; see also Gusterson 2019; Mazzarella 2019). Analyzing the history of conservative populism in the United States, Paul E. Johnson (2020) demonstrates how a racialized and gendered conception of possessive individualism deployed within conservative rhetoric grounds freedom in a lack of reliance on government, racializing the groups imagined to alone benefit from public goods (Goldberg 2008). *Ressentiments* against those perceived to benefit from the state are the focus of Casey Ryan Kelly's (2019) analysis of how Trump's humiliation of his audience sustains their desire for vengeance. While resentment is defined as a feeling of indignation in the face of unjust treatment, Friedrich Nietzsche's notion of *ressentiment* describes a condition of anger and frustration oriented towards the perceived cause of one's problems from a position of moral superiority (Nietzsche 1989). Using *ressentiments* tactically, Trump insults listeners, guiding them to dwell on their suffering without offering a resolution to this feeling (Kelly 2019). Although Kelly does not discuss racialized *ressentiments* specifically, he offers a framework for understanding the mobilization of moral emotion within Trump's talk which I draw on in the following sections of this article. I show how Trump's *ressentiments* work in practice to also include minorities in his political coalition. This happens through a triangulation of ressentiment towards 'elites enablers' who have the 'wrong sympathies', in addition to a group that is coded as undesirable or unworthy. It is this direction of attention towards the anti-Semitic category of the 'elite enablers' with the 'wrong sympathies', that allows listeners to then think of those 'wrong others' as a group that does not include them.

To show how race and gender are used as a modality for constructing the desirability of being a producer, this article examines the language of Trump speeches. Data is drawn from a random selection of fifty Trump speeches from 2017–2019, available through an online public archive which includes minute-by-minute video recordings of Trump speeches (Factba.se). The first section of the article defines the contrastive pairs of the coalition of makers, and the 'takers' in Trump speeches, constructing a maker coalition that cross-cuts economic class lines. The following section analyzes Trump's racializing and gendering of the host of enemies of the 'maker'—the 'takers' or parasites. Trump indirectly genders and racializes the 'taker', through its contrast with the construction of sympathy for the beleaguered 'maker', enabling a broad group of persons to feel alignment with the coalition even while race and gender are the modality through which that sympathy is built. At the same time, *ressentiments* redirect attention towards a Democratic elite with mistaken sympathies for the 'takers,' who are responsible for the diminished condition of the coalition. The conclusion suggests that Trump's language racializes and genders entities that represent an alternative system of value to a market ideology (see also Johnson 2020).

In portraying these alternative, racialized systems of value as illegitimate and undeserving, Trump's talk forecloses desires for regimes of value alternative to neoliberal ones.

Analyzing Racial and Gendered Ressentiments in Trump's Discourse

Close attention to Trump's language is necessary to understand how Trump uses the figure of the maker as an object around which different kinds of sympathies can be organized. The concept of stance enables us to see how Trump sets up contrastive pairs of 'makers' and 'takers' in talk, encouraging listeners to align their judgments towards that object. Stance is defined by John Du Bois (2007) as a public act of "simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects with respect to any salient dimension for the sociocultural field" (Du Bois 2007, p. 163). These acts of evaluation are discursive, affective, and physical, and express the feelings of the speaker towards the stance object. Usually, the stance object is the topic of discourse. Stance expresses systems of value that structure a particular social situation. Stance-taking within political speech refers to the moves—evaluations, judgments, and commentary about a stance object—that a speaker uses to condition how addressees orient their feelings towards that stance object. Derogatory phrases Donald Trump uses in his 2017 West Virginia speech, such as "widget-maker" and "delicate computer parts," convey his negative affective stance towards laborers in the technology industry by casting them as effeminate. At the same time, these derogative phrases implicitly express a positive affective stance toward the contrastive opposites of the "widget-maker" and "delicate computer parts"—the hale and masculine manual laborer. Through stance-taking, Trump sets up contrastive relationships between supposedly effete tech work and virile manual labor, enables his audience to imagine the labor market as structured by this opposition, and invites them to reorient their own evaluations of the technology sector to align with his expressed stances. The use of stance to create contrastive pairs between different and loosely defined groups of people is a tactic one would be hard-pressed not to find in any Trump discourse (see e.g., Sierra and Shrikant, 2020).[2]

By painting these different characters, such as effeminate tech workers, and expressing his stance toward them, Trump draws a landscape of an American public that is inherently raced, gendered, and classed, without doing so explicitly. The use of racial and gender stereotypes to express stance is an instance of dog-whistle politics, allowing politicians to covertly circulate racial and gender prejudices while maintaining plausible deniability (Lopez 2013). Using qualifiers such as "delicate," Trump invites the audience to infer the racial and gender stereotypes to which he alludes without having to directly state them.

However, the function of stance-taking is not merely to disguise racism and sexism. Instead, using racial and gender stereotypes to express stance has two interrelated purposes. Stance-taking effectively reframes a political understanding of labor and economic life in racial and gendered terms. At the same time, stance-taking defines the subjects and target audience of Trump's political discourse. Through stance-taking, Trump frames the economy as consisting of producers, or 'makers,' that are coded as masculine, rural, hard-working, hale, and White. In contrast, the consumers or 'takers' are coded as effete, foreign, urban, and non-White (Glickman 1997; Lowndes and HoSang, 2019; Peck 2014). In other words, through stance taking, Trump's producerist rhetoric uses race and gender to transform how the audience feel about their economic prospects and define who stands in the way of their economic prosperity.

By drawing these contrasts between 'makers' and 'takers' and expressing his stance towards them, Trump identifies who the core constituents of his coalition are, and who are the antagonists of that coalition—for example, not an effete tech worker but the real American West Virginian. Expressing stance through these contrastive racialized and

gendered oppositions is then a form of audience design (Bell 1984; Hutchby 2009)—discursive strategies used to identify the intended audience of a message. The main caveat here is that the people who are the topic of the discourse (the people who Trump is speaking about) and the people who are the intended audience of his discourse (the people who Trump is speaking to) need not necessarily be the same. Expressing a positive stance toward West Virginia miners in discourse, for example, does not mean that it is those miners who are the intended recipients of that discourse. It could also be a way to appeal to an audience who has romanticized, nostalgic ideals about the mining industry. More broadly, with stance-taking Trump is identifying the basic contours of this political coalition—who is he is for, and who he is against—and invites listers to align with him accordingly.

The stances that Trump expresses towards the items that he arranges in contrastive pairs assign blame and states of injury, identifying who has been wronged and who has done wrong. In so doing, his stances engender relations of sympathy, enmity, and *ressentiment* (see also Mazzarella 2019). Kelly further argues that Trump's rhetoric is characterized by the invocation of a 'man [sic] of *ressentiment*' (Scheler 1998), "seething with righteous anger and envy yet also suffering from the impotence to act or adequately express frustration" (Kelly 2019, p. 4). Racialized and gendered 'others' becomes symbolic of the 'unfair' reality Trump's audiences occupy, while *ressentiments* directed at various elites for causing this condition guide listeners' attention towards these groups. Through stance-taking in his speeches, Trump models for his audiences what the appropriate objects of sympathy and *ressentiment* should be for members of the coalition.

The *ressentiments* Trump marshals in his speeches, and the racial and gendered signifiers that Trump uses to invoke them, have their own histories that exceed the economic conjunctures of the time that the speeches were performed. Trump's rhetoric rouses his listeners' sympathies by using symbols of mid-century working-class life and labor politics (i.e., the livelihoods associated with blue collar work such as mining, factory work, and construction work; Glickman 1997; Hartman 2019; Lowndes and HoSang, 2019; Robbins 2017). Within this imaginary, blue-collar work is associated with masculinity and vitality. However, Trump draws on these symbols of working-class life that belong to an earlier era in a nostalgic key. The goal is not to speak directly to workers as such, but to use stances of sympathy with certain kinds of work, and resentment toward other kinds of work, to constitute a coalition of 'makers.' This coalition has at its center the political subject of the producer—or 'maker'—who may combine the symbols and aesthetics of blue-collar, working-class life with neoliberal ideas of entrepreneurship as part of their cultural identity but need not be working class in any strictly economic sense of the term.

The 'maker' as a political subject is primarily a discursive and symbolic construction with which people of various backgrounds can identify. The 'maker' is an aspirational political subject. The 'maker' appeals not to who people are but to who they desire to be. Those who feel interpellated by the 'maker,' then, do not necessarily share the same racial identity or socio-economic background, but they do share the same ideas about the future. Through the 'maker' Trump can construct a coalition that papers over existing material, socio-economic cleavages between wage labor, small business, entrepreneurs, and capital. In so far as the coalition that coheres around the maker is aspirational, its enmity and resentment is not directed primarily towards past wrongs and wrongdoers. Instead, *ressentiment* is oriented toward those who are imagined to deprive the coalition of the future to which it feels entitled, in particular the anti-Semitic frame of a Democratic 'elite.' This rhetoric excludes those 'undeserving' racialized and gendered 'others' but mobilizes *ressentiments* against a Democratic elite for causing the diminished condition of the broad coalition he wants to construct. The following section shows how Trump invokes symbols of a working-class to constitute this coalition of 'makers.' In his speeches, Trump does not

address a working class directly as his primary audience. Instead, his performance of sympathy for the working-class is part of an effort to constitute a coalition of makers (Laterza and Römer, 2016).

"How Would You Like to Make Computer Widgets?": Addressing the Coalition of Makers in Trump's Rhetoric

Without examining Trump's talk closely, it is easy to imagine that he is speaking to a White working-class. However, Trump's discourse does not speak of working-class politics as traditionally understood; there is no discussion of labor or unionizing, no mention of protections for workers which are usually associated with working-class politics. His speeches interpellate a different kind of subject, that of the hard-working 'maker.' This entrepreneurial coalition, and the language of vigor used to describe it, are intentionally vague enough to include everyone from a stockbroker to a machinist to the owner of a landscaping company. In some speeches, such as the one given in 2018 in West Virginia below, ostensibly Trump is addressing a community of coal miners. Nevertheless, the actual language Trump uses is about ownership, infrastructure, and the hard-working bodies of miners as opposed to tech workers, the latter of which he renders as effete 'widget makers'. While the topic of the West Virginia speech is miners and mining, it does not necessarily identify the mine worker as its intended audience. Instead, the speech centers around the miner as the character with whom the audience should sympathize.

In his speech in Wheeling, on September 29th, 2018, Trump expressed his sympathy with the White coal mining communities he visited. His policies alone, he argued, would redeem that population from destruction. In this segment, Trump presents himself as being in touch with coal miners:

> I produce. These are great people and they love not only the beautiful clean coal […] These guys are massive guys, they grab me. I say, "how would you like to make computer widgets?" "Nope, we want to dig coal." Right. They have no interest in little delicate computer parts (Trump 2018).

In this segment, Trump first identifies himself as a producer ("I produce") and expresses his positive stance towards coal and coal miners ("these are great people" and "they love … beautiful clean coal"). Then, Trump carefully positions himself in proximity to coal miners by using quoted speech to perform their voices ("Nope, we want to dig coal"), and by describing how these 'massive guys' are physically touching him ("they grab me"). In contrast, Trump expresses a negative stance and distances himself from makers of "computer widgets" through word choice ("delicate little computer parts"), quoted speech ("how would you like to make computer widgets?") and reported thought ("They have no interest…"). The "widget makers" are coded as effeminate ("delicate little computer parts") in contrast to the virile "massive guys" who, we are told, "want to dig coal." Notably, through quotative speech and reported thought, Trump attributes the negative stance towards electronics manufacturing to the coal miners who supposedly grabbed him and spoke to him while at the same time through his own word choices and affirmations ("Right") expresses that his negative stance toward "widget makers" as effeminate and "delicate" aligns with those of the miners he ventriloquizes.

The key point for analyzing this segment is to ask for whom and to whom he is attempting to present himself as being "in touch" with the miners. The elements of audience design in the speech identify that its intended recipients overlap with those that he uses to position himself in relationship to these miners. The very first utterance in the

segment is "I produce," which is a rhetorical identification device (Burke 1969). In line with the Burkean understanding of the first element of persuasion being the persuader identifying himself with the audience, Trump announces his own producer status to invite others to identify with him in that producerist frame. Trump is identifying himself as the kind of subject to whom he is trying to appeal. Trump announces that he is a producer, and therefore if the audience are also producers, he is talking to them. The quoted speech, the phrase that starts "I say, how would you like to make computer widgets?," positions Trump as being "in touch" with the miners, expresses his positive stance towards them, and includes these miners as fellow producers in the coalition of makers. The use of quotative speech to represent the politician as authentic and as a "man of the people" is well-attested in studies of populist rhetorical style (Rolfe 2016; Shoaps 1997; Wodak 2015). To underline the fact that he is "in touch" with the miners, he prefaces the quotative speech with "they grab me"—Trump positions himself as so "in touch" with the miners that they are literally touching his body. At the same time, his negative stance towards supposed widget makers—expressed through descriptors like "delicate little computer parts"—cast these as outsiders to this coalition of makers. Finally, he defines the coalition of makers around his sympathy and alignment with stances and preferences that he attributes to the miner. The coalition of makers is constituted through the performance of symbolic and sympathetic deference to the miners, who are used to personify the wants, desires, and fears of the coalition.

Another segment of the same West Virginia speech makes it even more evident that the intended audience of the speech is not the miners but the coalition of makers that shares a sympathetic alignment with the miner as a discursive topic. The miner becomes in this context a personification of the grievances, *ressentiments*, hopes, and sympathies of the coalition. In other words, this is a coalition constituted through talk about miners rather than addressed to them. The orientation toward the miner as a topic and not addressee is made clear in this segment using a possessive construction ("your coal mines and your miners"):

> They want to kill and this will happen, as sure as you're standing or sitting, I don't know who has a better seat. You are you. I mean this is a guarantee. Your coal mines and your miners are working. They will kill West Virginia coal, that's a guarantee (Trump 2018).

As in the previous example, Trump does not explicitly address West Virginians as workers or working-class but instead uses the symbolism of coal mining to address his audience as a coalition of makers under siege. When we look at the direct, linguistic addressee of Trump's speech, it is not miners who are being addressed: 'your coal mines and your miners' is an utterance that addresses a coalition of business owners as paternalistic stewards of the mining industry. At the same time, the utterance addresses all of West Virginia as if they are paternalistic stewards of the miners and the mines. By having a phrase that can both be read as addressing owners of capital and West Virginians as a whole, it strategically expands the category of ownership to include all inhabitants of the state.

Scholars have noted how owners and producers are often conflated in Trump rhetoric (Glickman 1997; HoSang and Lowndes, 2019). Trump is speaking to the people who own the mines, and speaking to the West Virginian public, constituting that public as people who own mines. The West Virginian public is made tantamount to the coalition of 'makers.' The coalition of makers congregates around the miner as the shared subject of their sympathy, albeit in a gendered, paternalistic fashion. The miner is the person from whom, later in his speech, he "got a hug." The direct addressee is the coalition of producers

or makers who, while not mine workers themselves, feel paternalistic sympathy towards the miners. This rhetoric invites a listener to associate themselves with mines and mine owners, not just with miners.

However, this entire segment of discourse is embedded in a racial frame. This segment of the speech begins with Trump endorsing West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, who in his following lines, is contrasted with Democrats, who "want to make us Venezuela," whose policies will "[erase] America's borders." The miner as a stance object is embedded in a racial frame because it stands in contrast to foreign others who threaten its future existence. This racial frame is then amplified by two subsequent declarations of the importance of building a wall, an act this new antagonist, the Democrats, oppose. Democrats, who Trump has maligned in his previous utterances for opposing funding for the military and Trump's wall, will, through environmental policies and regulations, "kill coal." The xenophobic, racial frame operates through the evocation of the miner as the telluric, masculine native tied to 'blood' and 'soil', opposed to Democrats who want to make the United States into a "big version" of Venezuela. This frame of the United States about to become Venezuela, threatens a racial and ethnic othering from within: the same motif Trump then repeats in his following anecdote about widget makers. Coal miners are threatened with displacement by effeminate "widget makers" and the "they"—who we can assume to be 'elite' Democrats—who are abetting this devious displacement plot.

Those who want to "kill coal" become, alongside the delicate "computer widget makers," objects of *ressentiment* that stand in contrast to the miners for whom sympathy is expressed. Notable is the degree to which the addressee—the coalition of makers—is rendered passive in the face of a host of enemies constructed as both strong and weak at the same time. Tech workers are effeminate and weak, and yet a threat to the coalition of makers. "This will happen," "as sure as you're standing or sitting," and "I don't know who has a better seat," all describe the coalitions as spectators observing Democratic efforts to bring about their economic demise. Mines are working, and the makers are powerful "massive guys," but also if something is not done, they are guaranteed to be killed.

The racial framing of the contrastive stances of sympathy ("your miners are working") and *ressentiment* ("they will kill") is reinforced because the expression of these stances is both preceded and followed by a long series of injunctions urging the building of a border wall to exclude "dangerous" Mexicans and Central Americans. In this narrative, Trump talks about U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) policing Long Island, where he was raised:

> What's happened is they go in like they're, liberating a country. It's like this is the United States and ICE goes in and MS-13 they're afraid of ICE (Trump 2018).

ICE "invades" these homes, grabs MS-13 "by the necks" and either deports them or takes them to prison. Thus, the category of others who endanger Trump's coalition of makers gets expanded to include immigrants alongside the effeminate "computer widget"-makers and Democrats. The "hard-working" yet embattled coalition of producers and makers is constituted in reference to certain working-class jobs, such as mining, and also in contrast to other working-class jobs in electronics manufacturing and to immigrants. Doing so the coalition of listeners can identify with the symbolism that saturates his language—which fuses grit, masculinity, Whiteness, and nativism—but does so implicitly through the racial frame built in the utterances that precede and follow Trump's direct invocation of mines and miners.

Building "the wall" itself is an expression of stance and alignment. Even if the wall is never built, conveying support for the wall is a mode of constituting the coalition as embattled and deserving of sympathy and care, while casting others outside the coalition as unworthy of anything but punishment, surveillance, and confinement (Santa Ana et al., 2020). In other words, only certain people 'deserve' sympathy and care in the form of infrastructure, while others explicitly 'deserve' infrastructure in the form of walls or prisons. Building the wall expresses the paternalistic care of Trump toward the entirety of his coalition of makers, who feel beset by various racialized and gendered threats to their economic future. The hallowing of the suffering of the maker, who deserves care because of their neoliberal virtues of grit and entrepreneurialism, and the expression of *ressentiment* towards 'takers' and 'enablers' who purportedly threaten their prospects for a prosperous future, invites anyone with these sympathies and *ressentiments* to see Trump as championing their interests. Examining how stance and covert racial coding work in Trump's speeches helps us to understand the racial and class heterogeneity of Trump's coalition.

"They Let Criminals Go In": Naming and Defining the Host of Enemies

The American rhetorical tradition of producerism generates a contrastive relationship between the maker and the taker, between the producer and the parasite (HoSang and Lowndes, 2019; Johnson 2020, Peck 2014, Wylie 1942). Trump's rhetoric employs this contrast between maker and taker in its forms of address. As was evident in the West Virginia speech discussed in the previous section, when Trump adopted a stance of sympathy towards miners to define the coalition of makers as his target audience, he pairs and contrasts this with a stance of fear and outrage towards enemies putatively threatening the miners. The injunction to build the wall expresses his sympathy to his coalition, expresses hostility to others who threaten it, and ultimately affirms his loyalty to the coalition he aims to address.

In the speeches analyzed for this study, Trump introduces race and gender into his version of producerist discourse in two key ways: by the contrastive pairing of stances of sympathy with fear, outrage, and disgust, and by making plausibly deniable allusions to xenophobic, racial, and gender stereotypes (Bonilla-Silva 2019; Hill 2008; Lopez 2013). Trump takes opposing stances towards contrastive pairs of subjects: the coalition of 'makers' is praised and their struggles are worthy of sympathy, in contrast to the host of enemies who are vilified, deemed unworthy of care, and improperly sympathize with the vilified and unworthy. This pairing of praise and blame, of sympathy and scorn occurs sometimes in every other line through ten minutes of a Trump talk, such as during a rally in Monroe, Louisiana on November 6, 2019. In this speech, Trump endorsed a Republican businessman and candidate for governor, Eddie Rispone, by contrasting him with both Rep. Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, and Jane Fonda as a climate change protester and traitor to America during her trip to North Vietnam in 1972. "Eddie will defend you from the all-out assault by the extreme-left," he announced, an assault led by the group of congresswomen he called "AOC-plus-three" (Trump 2019c). Trump's following lines address Ocasio-Cortez' support for climate change, in contrast to business:

> You only have eleven years to live, folks, eleven years, because change is just coming up on an [unintelligible]. You know, it's twelve years but today, I heard one of these crazies say it's down to eleven, and they arrested Jane Fonda. Nothing changes. I remember thirty, fourty years ago. They– she always has the handcuffs on. Oh man, she's waving to everybody with the handcuffs, I can't believe it. They– remember that? She went to Vietnam to find out how nice they were. They weren't too nice to her by

the way. No they arrest her every, every twenty-five years they arrest her (Trump 2019c).

This distinctive feature in the version of producerist discourse found in Trump speeches is that the foil to the coalition of makers includes two categories: the first are the 'parasites,' such as women, immigrants, and racial minorities. He presents these groups as threats to the makers by invoking xenophobia, racism, and sexism against immigrants, racial minorities, and women. In the above example, the takers are personified by 'crazy' Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez who cares only for the environment, not business. The second category are 'enablers' who, unlike him, fail to display the appropriate sympathy and loyalty toward the coalition of makers. In that latter group of 'enablers,' one can find references to Democrats, so-called Globalists, technocrats, or coastal elites—in this example, Jane Fonda.

What makes Trump discourse particularly powerful is the pairing of the enabler and the taker together as constituting the 'enemy' of the coalition of makers. In the above quote, Trump references multiple Fonda arrests, including one recent arrest at a Washington, DC climate change protest. However, the one he dwells on is Fonda's trip to North Vietnam to protest the Vietnam war, though she was not arrested on that trip as Trump implies. The phrase "she went to Vietnam to find out how nice they were," is a typical example of Trump's portrayal of people who are enablers. Enablers fail to show loyalty to the makers, and instead mistakenly express solidarity with the wrong, racialized group, in this case, North Vietnamese ("They weren't too nice to her, by the way"). Using the image of Jane Fonda, Trump indirectly indexes Fonda's inappropriate sympathy for a racialized other, the North Vietnamese. This indirect index equates Fonda's inappropriate sympathy for a foreign entity, North Vietnam, with her current 'inappropriate' sympathy for climate change activism, supported by the archetypical 'taker', and gendered and racialized figure in this anecdote, Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez. Importantly, Trump spends more time talking about Fonda than he does about Ocasio-Cortez. Directing focus towards the elite 'enablers,' or people with the 'wrong sympathies,' Trump's language invokes a racialized other (Ocasio-Cortez, North Vietnamese), but the majority of his talk is about Fonda. Within this discourse of *ressentiment*, it is Fonda, the stand-in for the Democratic elite, who Trump indirectly suggests is to blame for his audience's impending death ("eleven years to live", "change is just coming up"). The Democratic left 'crazies' are the ones responsible for leaning into the concerns of 'others' (North Vietnamese, climate change), as opposed to the righteous wants of the coalition Trump endeavors to create. The implication is that elites are responsible for facilitating the disruption of a correct social hierarchy. Racial ideologies ground Trump's discourse of exclusion, while *ressentiments* towards an elite sustain the coalition's desire for vengeance for its diminished condition. What unites the 'takers' and the 'enablers' as enemies is their alleged betrayal of the coalition of makers. In a speech given at Sunrise Florida in 2019, Trump expresses contempt for undocumented migrants who he demonizes as criminals, and for Democrats, who he accuses of betraying the 'makers' by "tak[ing] away all [your] healthcare and giv[ing] it to illegal immigrants." This claim that lumps together the 'taker' and 'enabler' into a host of enemies, all in cahoots with each other, was repeated frequently and even featured in one of his 2019 campaign ads. Racism and xenophobia, here, define the host of enemies of the makers, in two ways: immigrants are criminalized using racial stereotypes, but others, such as Democrats, are disparaged because they align with those racial others, who are putatively unworthy and undeserving of such sympathy. What these two categories of enemies, 'takers' and 'enablers', have in common are their wayward sympathies, which Trump usually describes along with the danger to the coalition of makers that these sympathies represent. That danger is sometimes stated directly, as in "Democrats will kill coal"—but often packaged

within fears of death which are attributed to or caused by the takers, as in the phrase "you have only eleven years to live." These direct and indirect associations with a fear of death consolidate listeners' antipathy towards the host of enemies of the coalition of makers.

In another Greenville, North Carolina speech on July 17, 2019, Trump addressed his audience as victimized by Democrats who do not properly sympathize with their grievances. After accusing Democratic representative Ayanna Pressley of being a radical and for inciting "Antifa" violence, Trump said:

> She said we don't need any more brown faces that don't want to be brown voices. We don't need Black faces, that don't want to be a Black voice. And just as we—can you imagine, if I said that? It would be over. Right? It would be over. It would be over, but we'd find a way to survive. Right? We always do. Here we are. Here we are. We find a way…always find a way (Trump 2019a).

In the segment, Trump posits contrastive relations between Ayanna Pressley, himself ("if I said that"), and the "we" ("here we are") that he is addressing and in which he includes himself. Since Ayanna Pressley is Black and Donald Trump is White, these contrastive relations between "she," "I" and "we" in Trump's speech inevitably index race even if Trump never explicitly labels the "we" he addressed as White. In this context, the utterance invites a plausibly deniable racialized reading. With "can you imagine if I said that?" Trump intimates that Ayanna Pressley—a Black woman—gets to say things that he cannot say. Hyperbolically, Trump says that if he said something like Ayanna Pressley did he would be "over." Potential criticism here gets inflated into existential danger ("we'd find a way to survive"). Trump thus overtly describes himself and the public that he addresses as beleaguered, while covertly indexing that his public is White, and is being beleaguered by a group that includes non-White people.

In that Greenville speech, Trump followed his comments about Ayanna Pressley by inveighing against Antifa, which he alleges waged violence against an innocent ("never attacked before") hard-working American "with a camera" (2019a). In so doing, Trump reinforces a framing of the public he addresses as a coalition of 'makers' besieged by a host of enemies by introducing an anecdote in which a Trump rally attendee, who he described as innocently taking pictures and not bothering anyone, became the victim of Antifa beatings. The power of that anecdote lies in its use of the host of enemies (Pressley, Democrats, Antifa) to construe his coalition of makers as suffering and worthy of sympathy. Trump's statement again pairs sympathy (survival) and *ressentiment* ("if I said that? It would be over.") to consolidate listeners around these racialized feelings. While the coalition of makers Trump addresses is covertly coded as White, the beleaguered figure with the camera is an image of a person with whom any listeners, not just a White audience, might sympathize. His rhetoric again invokes a fear of death, "it would be over;" pre-empts death, "but we'd find a way to survive;" and memorializes past generations, "we always find a way." The suturing of past and present—'we always' find a way to survive—posits an embattled [White] America as having been under threat not only in a present moment, but in the past as well. Once again, the public he is addressing is not situated as an agent in the present, only as a potential future protagonist of their own lives. In the present moment, the public is consigned to passivity and mere survival. The utopian past, projected onto the future, leaves Trump himself as the only actor capable of returning this public to their rightful place in a social order.

Toward the end of his presidency, Trump begins to use the term 'elite' and 'global elite' more frequently to refer to Democrats as masterminds of a globalist plot responsible for the plight of the 'makers,' the hard-working, entrepreneurial subjects of sympathy.[3] The

entrepreneurial maker is besieged by 'globalists.' While localized and tailored in slightly different ways for each state audience, this overall messaging remains consistent. In Florida speeches, for example, Trump uses the producer/maker concept to split a Hispanic audience into two: those who are 'makers' and those who are 'takers', some worthy of sympathy and others worthy of disregard. In a Sunrise, Florida speech on November 26, 2019, Trump addressed his coalition of makers who were under attack by Colombian narco-traffickers and Central American gangs (Trump 2019b):

> They [Democrats] want sanctuary cities, let the criminals go in. They want open borders, let everybody pour into our country, no matter who they are, and they want one other thing, higher taxes. […] The Democrats want to raise taxes, have open borders, and have sanctuary cities. To me, I don't think that plays about—what the heck do I know? They want to raise your taxes and the threat is to every child whose school is under siege from these horrible gangs that they would allow in like MS13 (Trump 2019b).

In his first line, (and missing the point that 'sanctuaries' are against state violence towards migrants) Trump uses the term 'sanctuary city' as a synonym for immigrant, equating all undocumented immigrants with criminals. He then blames Democrats ("they want," "they would allow") in the following lines for open borders that enable criminals to enter U.S. cities. His final utterance refers specifically to Central American gangs like MS13, specifying that these groups plan to lay siege to U.S. schools. Colombian or El Salvadoran Trump audiences in Florida are the deserving makers, hearing this rhetoric, while others— MS13 or gangs in Central or South America—are the takers. Hispanic audiences could sympathize with Trump's heightened law and order discourse, materialized through an alignment against a familiar enemy (gangs like MS13) and Democratic technocrats doling out taxes and [bad] regulations. The language here racializes through reference to Central American gangs, as opposed to White and wealthier Hispanic communities in Florida listening to Trump's speeches. The contrast drawn is again between Democrats, who have the wrong sympathies for the wrong kind of racial and ethnic groups, and Republicans, who are the object of the rhetoric immediately following these lines, who have sympathies for the right kinds of hard-working Americans.

Finally, the host of enemies are also gendered as weak, feminine, infantile, and not worthy of inclusion in what Trump terms the 'deserving' America. Trump's audiences are witnesses to Democratic discord, emasculated and enervated children, fighting one another:

> They're just fighting with each other. We have all of the enthusiasm. He goes home to mommy and he gets reprimanded and that's the end. Sorry mommy. Sorry mom. Didn't mean to embarrass you, mom. We have the enthusiasm, folks (Trump 2018).

The Democratic subject of this anecdote is an infantilized, emasculated male—"he goes home" to be reprimanded. Here Trump again aligns with the entrepreneurial coalition he is conjuring through gendered *ressentiments.* He animates the voice of an imagined upper-class Democrat, not only ashamed himself, but humiliated in the face of others' feelings of disapproval ('reprimand') towards him. Compounding the protagonist's humiliation is the fact that it is a mother figure to whom the man runs. Rather than 'behaving like a man,' the pleasure in the narrative is the humiliation of the Democratic child running home to his mother, only to be scolded.

The associations in the final quotation above are ones that feminize a technocratic class—depicting a Democratic civil servant as a child and not a 'real man' or 'real American.' Within a U.S. popular imaginary, a managerial or technocratic class is often coded as masculine, but within Trump's discourse this group becomes feminized, associated with 'mothers,' schoolmarms (such as Trump's depictions of Elizabeth Warren), secretaries, government agencies, or human resources departments enforcing workplace regulations. In this utterance, Trump creates a familial psychodrama of boys tired of being forced to abide by their mothers' rules. By coding what sociologists have called a professional-managerial class, and what this article has referred to as a technocratic class, as feminine, Trump marshals *ressentiments* against a group of people who, in neoliberal societies, are crucial in generating public morality (for examples see Stevenson 2012; Scherz 2011; Ticktin 2011). It is this group that decides—in government agencies, HR departments, local or international policymaking—who is worthy or unworthy of receiving care from the state and society in general.

Trump's use of contrastive pairs in rhetoric sets up *ressentiments* towards Democrats, immigrants, and racial and ethnic minorities by first narrating the beleaguered neoliberal subject—humiliated by closed mines or scarce jobs Trump blames on Democrats and global outsourcing. In the final quotation above, he then contrasts this group to the coalition of makers: "we have all the enthusiasm." While the Democrats are 'just fighting' with one another, his political coalition has momentum. His rhetoric thus projects a fear of death, weakness, embarrassment, and shame—which in previous parts of the speech have been associated with miners' diminished conditions—and in this narrative, projects them onto a Democratic elite (see also Berlant and Warner, 1998; Eco 2006).[4] Pleasure here is derived through gendering of subjects of *ressentiment*, sympathy, and disregard. Trump effectively draws on a working-class repertoire of symbols and interests to organize an appeal to a broad racial and ethnic political coalition.

Conclusion: Producerism, Race, and the Neoliberal Entrepreneurial Subject

Trump's constructions of a neoliberal maker were made through reactionary rhetoric against technocratic elites and regulation, coupled with the mid-century symbolism of a (White) working class. His language was often oblique and vague—he frequently indexed a working-class, referring to 'hard-working' Americans, grit and brawn, factories, and mines while drawing on deeper currents of anti-globalization sentiment produced by the Republican party over several decades. Newt Gingrich, shaping Republican messaging, often expressed deep hatred for 'motivational professionals', a managerial class, and academics. No expertise was necessary to understand how people were wronged by global capital (Didion 2002). For Gingrich and others, globalization meant new forms of regulation that constrained profiteering, while for a working-class it meant outsourced jobs or lower prices for agricultural goods. Both groups were able to sympathize with the image of a self-defined entrepreneur, taking risks to get ahead, but victimized by globalization.

However, the analysis in this article illustrates how ostensibly anti-neoliberal or anti-globalist rhetoric is a smokescreen for modalities of discourse that use race and gender to further subsume listeners to a market logic—by racializing and gendering the institutions that represent alternative regimes of value. Central to post-WWII U.S. liberalism is a disavowal of morality and politics in favor of an ostensibly objective and apolitical, amoral technocratic rationality (Brown 2015, 2019). Within a U.S. public sphere, technocracy, risk, and calculation are all imagined as procedural, secular frameworks through which questions of right and wrong are eliminated; and in which moral frameworks for discrediting an opposing argument (smart/dumb, for example) take precedence. Within a Trumpian epistemology, there is no objective threat, measured or documented by science or

government, that a public can or should believe, nor any group of 'experts' whose metrics can determine what that threat might be. Trump's rhetoric degrades the institutions responsible for making moral determinations of good and bad, worthy or unworthy in the first place: bureaucrats and a managerial class, and the persons who have constructed the informational architecture that produces these calculations, classifications, and judgments. Trump does not criticize moral judgments themselves, but the institutions making the wrong kinds of determinations. Rather than the illegitimate judgments of racialized technocrats and elites, it is Trump and his supporters who should be making these moral decisions.

Thus, on the surface, Trump's discourse appears to be antagonistic to neoliberalism, and an anti-globalist rhetoric is indeed prevalent in his speeches. However, attending to the ways in which different social groups are racialized and gendered within Trump's talk reveals that he is in fact doubling down on neoliberalism in three important ways (see also Kotsko 2019, Lebow 2014, Wraight 2019). First, the regime of value represented by technocrats and elites, and the expertise they wield, are illegitimate precisely because they are not subject to market forces. By racializing and gendering the groups of people who are the 'enemy of the maker,' he in fact strengthens the animating tension of neoliberal ideology around the desire to get rid of regulation, get rid of the state, and free the market (Harvey 2017). Some analysts have argued that working-class Trump supporters are the harbingers of an anti-neoliberal revolt (Brown 2019; Fraser 2019); however, close attention to the use of race and gender in Trump's talk demonstrates how his language amplifies neoliberal ideology rather than reacts against it.

Second, developing Goldberg's insights into the privatization of race in the United States, an important effect of Trump's resignification of class into the category 'maker' which primarily indexes status, is the fact that it then enables Trump to construct American economic life as a whole in racialized and gendered terms. If neoliberal public institutions were no longer spaces in which racialized exclusions could be made (Goldberg 2008), then constantly depicting aspects of private life and status, from labor to consumption to leisure, as racialized and gendered allows Trump to further entrench a racialized vision of economy within his listeners' perspectives on their everyday lives in their entirety.

Finally, this article has shown how Trump in fact offers listeners a meta-narrative about neoliberalism itself. Trump's language not only associates the state bureaucracy with Blackness and femininity (Goldberg 2008), but provides an expansive moral narrative about the very architecture of the state. In this narrative, the agents of regulation, indirectly racialized and gendered as women, people of color, and Jews, are those positioned as controlling the technocratic institutions that determine who is worthy and unworthy. In other words, and in an arche-neoliberal style, Trump's discourse indirectly assigns people of color and the state the role of 'racializing' a U.S. public—insofar as they are the ones who make these determinations of worthiness. In other words, Trump's racialization of a technocratic and elite group strengthens this animating tension of neoliberalism: were it not for this illegitimate group interfering with market value, the natural social order, with the maker at the top of that hierarchy, would reassert itself.

Thus, at its broadest, this article illustrates how within American political rhetoric, it is producerism that plays an important role in facilitating the ongoing and neoliberal transformation of race from a fixed social position anchored to class and color, to a shifting signifier indexed more and more through stance-taking within discourse. These stances are moral appraisals and alignments that encompass not only anti-Blackness but also anti-Semitic *ressentiments* towards an elite and racialized, undeserving others (foreigners, refugees, tech workers). Trumpian rhetoric presents *ressentiments* towards the 'undeserving' as a civic virtue in which anyone can participate, as the 'unworthy' can always be understood by listeners as referring to others as the excluded group, not them.

The significance of Trump's rhetoric and its effects extend far beyond his decision to run for president again in 2024 elections. As Margaret Thatcher did for right-wing politics in Britain during the 1980s, constructing a cross-class political alliance (Hall 2021), Trump used race and gender to paradoxically expand the appeal of the concept of the maker. He deployed racial and gendered *ressentiments* to set up contrasts between the sympathetic figure of the producer, and the racial and ethnic others not deserving of sympathy. Further, the moral argument for the worthiness of the maker is construed through gendered, familial metaphors and images, which conceal the indirect racialization of those who are portrayed as a threat to the coalition of deserving makers. Listening closely to Trump's discourse and its synchrony with neoliberal values reveals the extent to which the strategies he uses will continue to shape American political rhetoric. The majority of Trump's speeches were pure stance-taking, moving between his appraisals of one group versus another. Concepts like class and race were evacuated of substantive meaning and made into objects of stance-taking, opportunities for audiences to align and misalign with this style of speech. Racializing and gendering institutions that represented alternatives to market ideologies, Trump discursively undermined market regulation and economic redistribution. Thus, *ressentiments* towards a technocratic or managerial class, the elite enablers, became the way in which Trump was able to double down on White supremacy, neoliberalism, and bring diverse racial and ethnic groups into his political coalition at the same time.

Notes

[1] *Ressentiment*, according to Friedrich Nietzsche (1989), is a desire to direct hostility towards the perceived cause of one's suffering by claiming a position of moral superiority towards that perceived cause.

[2] In the data for this article (a random selection of fifty Trump campaign speeches from 2017-2019 available through an online public archive which includes minute by minute video-recordings (Factba.se)), the construction of racialized and gendered contrastive pairs is present in all of the speeches included in this sample. Sierra and Shrikant's (2020) analysis of racial bias in Trump's televised listening sessions reveals examples of Trump's use of contrastive pairs as well, suggesting that this phenomenon is prevalent throughout different genres of Trump discourse.

[3] Journalists have also called attention to the anti-Semitism present in Trump's appeals to Latinx communities in Florida and the U.S. South (JTA and Sales, 2016).

[4] Berlant and Warner (1998), analyzing the sexualization of national membership in the United States, also argue that heteronormative, familial images disguise structural racism and inequality in American society. Much of this work is done through tropes of intimacy, such as those found in the familism invoked in Trump's producerist discourse, or the mother and child dynamic Trump narrates here.

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