



Policy on Purpose

Season 1, Special Episode: Former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu (Recorded Live)

NARRATOR: This is “Policy on Purpose,” a podcast produced by the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin. We take you behind the scenes of policy with the people who help shape it. For more, visit lbj.utexas.edu.

SUSAN NOLD, ANNETTE STRAUSS INSTITUTE FOR CIVIC LIFE: Good afternoon. Thank you all for being here. Welcome to UT Austin. I want to thank Dean Angela Evans and the staff of the LBJ School of Public Affairs and all of my team at the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life for putting this program together today. I'm Susan Nold — I'm director of the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life. We are a unit in the Moody College of Communication that's established to celebrate, study and teach the citizen's role in public life. We're founded on the knowledge that active, engaged citizens are made and not born, and that society benefits when more people take part. Many UT students will know us for being the home of [Texas Votes](#), a nonpartisan student voter registration organization, and the UT Civic Engagement Alliance. You'll see these folks tabling with voter registration cards very actively for the next three weeks. We are also known to many of you for hosting the annual great conversations dinner each spring, putting out the Texas Civic Health Index report and for lots and lots of outstanding faculty research that explore and expand our understanding of civic participation.

So I'm delighted by the turnout here today. You all are in for a real treat. The program is going to be captured in a podcast, so if you like what you hear, you'll be able to listen again and share it with folks that you know. There will also be time for audience questions at the end, so be thinking of things that you'd like to ask. It's now my pleasure to introduce a man who really needs no introduction: Cappy McGarr. Cappy joins us today from Dallas, where he's president of MCM interests. Professionally and personally, Cappy has been an investor in business, philanthropy, politics and UT Austin for over 40 years. His service to the university and his civic affiliations are truly too many to name. Cappy was a student at UT Austin in the '70s. He was a campus leader many times over and he even earned three degrees from UT Austin. In the year since I suspect Cappy and his wife Janie are only three degrees removed from anyone and everyone who has a connection to this university.

Any students who spend time up in the Belo Center for New Media and the Moody College will recognize Cappy for the coffee shop that bears his name. Please join me in welcoming my friend Cappy McGarr.

CAPPY MCGARR: Thank you, Susan. Mayor Mitch Landrieu recently gave an interview where he asked what was the most surprising thing he learned while writing the book he's going to discuss today. His reply: "You don't always write the way you speak and you don't use as much historical detail and speeches because speeches are supposed to be short. The more you talk, the less people will listen." So Mr. Mayor, I hear you. I'll be brief. I graduated from UT over 40 years ago, but back then burnt orange, our school color, was not the presidential secret service codename.

This is supposed to be a university crowd. Come on, you all, catch up. Geez. Unbelievable. For years, I've been honored to serve on the board of the LBJ Foundation. In 2000 I became the founding co-chair of the Annette Strauss Institute, named for my late mother-in-law. I was always trying to impress her since long before that. Annette was the first woman mayor elected of Dallas and I knew she would love to have the former mayor, Mitch Landrieu, here today because she knew the challenges of being mayor. LBJ once famously said, when the burdens of the presidency seem unusually heavy, always remind myself it could be worse. I could be a mayor. So it's fitting we bring two great longhorn institutions, the LBJ School and the Annette Strauss Institute together for this event, and we're going to hear some great things from a man who has done so much to bring his city together.

I want to thank Susan Nold, the director of the Annette Strauss Institute, and Dean Angela Evans of the LBJ School, for organizing this event. But I'd really like to thank my good friend Walter Robb, who was previously the CEO of Whole Foods, for making today possible — and for UT students, Whole Foods is sort of like a bigger version of Wheatsville Co-op. I want to thank Mayor Landrieu for joining us today. Mr. Mayor, if you haven't heard, the UT motto is "What starts here changes the world" — so if you're looking for a perfect place to make some sort of national announcement, this is it.

(applause)

As you know, last year, Mayor Landrieu took the extraordinary step of removing Confederate monuments around the city of New Orleans. I'm thinking about the flooding of the Hurricane Florence and of course the flooding in New Orleans from Katrina, and I was reminded of a visit LBJ did in New Orleans in the aftermath of a hurricane in 1965 called Hurricane Betsy. There was no electricity in the city. LBJ went into a shelter, literally dark, and he had a big flashlight and he shined the flashlight in his face and he said to the assembled, he said, "My name is Lyndon Baines Johnson. I'm your president. I'm here to make sure you have the help you need." That is a true story, unlike today.

(applause)

It echoed something LBJ said in New Orleans a year earlier when he came through on a campaign stop. He said, "Our cause is no longer the cause of party alone. Our cause is the cause of a great nation." Leaders who are here to help leaders who put our country first. I think we may just have one of them that will speak to you shortly, so to chat with him, please welcome Dean Angela Evans. Thank you.

MITCH LANDRIEU: Hey Dean, hi, how are you?

ANGELA EVANS: Hi, how are you? Good.

LANDRIEU: Hi, everybody.

EVANS: So Cappy warmed up the crowd, I think —

LANDRIEU: Way before we started I told him I wasn't going to do this. I'm only going to do it because I'm here because I'm an LSU [man]: Hook, 'em Horns. But I'ma watch out taking that out of context.

EVANS: So thank you all for coming. This is really a treat for us and Mayor, thank you for spending time with us and allowing us to hear some of your story. We're just really pleased to have you here. So in the book, this is the book "[In the Shadow of Statues](#)" and there is a lot going on in this book. It's about the Confederate statues, but it's much more — it's about this man. And what made him, what gave him the stamina and the courage and the persistence to move on. So it's his whole life story.

So we're going to try to explore some of that today. So I'm going to get started with my questions. I'm going to have some questions, and then we're going to leave some time for all of you to ask your questions as well. So my first question really comes from your book, the prologue. It says, "Can someone get me a crane?" And when I read that and then I started looking at the book, this is really about [how] you make a decision and when you make that decision, you step into an arena that you — there's a lot of unknowns. Are you going to have supporters? Are you going to have people who really don't like you? That they hate you, that they shun you that they work against you and this little thing, can someone get me a crane? It's like, I'm going to do this now. Who's going to help me implement it?

And when you do it, you might be running into something that you might not have looked forward to or ever had experience. So what I want the mayor to talk to us about is what does that mean when you say, can someone get me a crane? What does that mean in terms of persistence?

LANDRIEU: I will. Thank you. First of all, thank you very much for having me. Thank all of you for having me; Walter and Cappy, thank you for hosting me here. And the entire family of UT is a great school.

You are in really one of the great cities of the world — I know Mayor Adler is not here with us, but he is a spectacular mayor and a great friend. And to all of the university leaders: thank you for having me.

When Cappy was introducing me, he said, which one of the hardest things you learned about writing a book? And I said, you don't really write the way you speak, especially with an accent like mine. And the truth is that, when you write a book, they say, what's the first part of that book is really important because it needs to captivate people. They really kind of have to see in its immediacy what the problem was. And the truth is, the first time I wrote that line, can somebody get me — there were a couple of expletives in there — a crane. And they said, well, you can't, that's not the way you start off a book. But essentially what that story is about in the prologue turns out to be about institutional racism. And the specific problem that had been created is that, notwithstanding the fact that the mayor of a major American city who owned a piece of property on behalf of the citizens owned, that I tried to exercise authority over through a constitutionally created process.

In other words, public hearings that were voted on by duly elected representatives that said, yes, we want to take down the statue, to a number of different boards and commissions that had to do it to the city council voting for it to the mayor signing an executive order. To the legislature trying to opine about this. I know that you don't have this here in the state where the legislature tries to tell cities what to do. But you might want to contemplate what that would like if you have a personally experienced that. To seven different courts with 13 separate judges opining. That's about as a democratic process as you can have. Even after all of that was done and I as the mayor was given complete and total authority now to act on behalf of the citizens. The legal part of what we did was finished.

We had the full authority through the democratic process to operate, but then something else happened which was not withstanding that fact. It was still hard for me to take them down because I could not find a contractor to give me a crane. Now, let me put this in broader context for you. Say New Orleans, as you know, got beat to death after Katrina. Five hundred thousand homes across the Gulf South hurt, 1,800 people plus died. They're still [*unintelligible*], by the way — we'll talk about Puerto Rico in a minute. There are still unclaimed bodies that have not been identified since Katrina, that we have buried that we revere every year in New Orleans, but 1,800 people lost, a city that was in the midst of completely being rebuilt. We've rebuilt 33 new schools. We've built two new hospitals. We're in the process of rebuilding a billion-dollar airport.

We've completely reconstructed the city, which is to say there'll lots of damn cranes around. And the mayor of the city would drive around and see all the cranes, but I couldn't get anybody to give me a crane. On top of that, I couldn't find anybody to operate the crane. Now, maybe all of you understand this, but the African-American community clearly understands, this is the difference between de facto and de jure discrimination. You can still control all of the laws. Think of *Brown v. Board of Education* and the words “with all deliberate speed,” but if you don't have your hands on the power, if you don't have the money, if you don't have the machines, if

you don't have the ability, you all what I said and we would say in New Orleans on the street, SOL — I won't fill it out for you, but you are smart enough to figure out what that means.

(laughter)

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) And so the reason why I started the book off with that is because I wanted people to understand that even in the second decade of the 21st century, even well after this issue had been litigated again after a democratic process had been implemented after the law had said yes, it was still hard to move into the actuality of doing the thing that a democratically elected mayor with legislative support and judicial support wanted to do. Which is to say that we've got a long way to go on the issue of race and that the theory of the book [is] about race. That's really what the book is about — is that you can't go over it, you can't go under it, you can't go around it. You got to go through it, and going through it hurts. And going through it requires recognition of wrongs that were committed, and understanding that they have an ability to admit that we can do better.

A thought about how to go forward. And then the reconciliation and a part of another part of the book, I say that may be the six most important words maybe probably in our private lives and in our public lives and as a matter of policy is the ability to say, "I am sorry" and then "I forgive you," because we could spend forever litigating whose fault everything was or anything was. And I'm not saying that that's not important. Those are important things to know. But sometimes if you get stuck on whose fault it is, you never get to where we can fix it. And so one of the things that I've kind of learned after 30 years of being in an office is that I can't really figure out whose fault everything is, but I know whose responsibility it is to fix it. And that's those of us that are here today, which gives us a pathway to move forward if we're able, if we're able to actually talk through these issues, understand what our real history is, how we really understand it, which takes you into the issues of what does being a patriot really mean.

What does being a great American really mean? What does it really mean to be out of many, we are one? Is diversity really a strength rather than a weakness? Is democracy really better than autocracy? All of these things that we thought had been put to rest with the new world order is now being questioned, and what happened is when we were taking these statutes, then it was just happened to be at a time, coincidentally, when all of these issues began to get litigated once again during the presidential race, because we had started to take these monuments down well before that. This thing started in 2014 for us, but actually, physically, when they came down it actually turned out to be a short time after President Trump was elected. When the nation began to be all aflutter and in alienation and in suspended aggravation where we all are right now, you know, about this and any other issue that was of any semblance of difficult.

EVANS: One of the things that comes out in the book several times is you have the passion. You have the purpose. You have the office. You talked about you had behind you the rule of law and you had behind you a lot of history with the city, from your family and from your position as lieutenant governor and mayor. And even when you went to some people who were your

supporters, when push came to shove and it became difficult. And for example, one of the persons who did have a crane who was willing to do that was car bombed and threatened. So there was that level of pushback. Can you talk to us a little bit about how you get through that to people who really fundamentally would like to do it, but the courage or the history of trying to do that, they don't have that. I mean, where do you go from there?

LANDRIEU: Well, that's an excellent question. The question really is more about how you overcome fear and whether or not you take a risk of what sacrifice you're willing to make to do a certain thing. Not all problems are created equal. You don't want to die on your sword for something that's not worth dying for. But there are certain things that are. And so we face these almost all the time in our private lives and our public lives and our business — and knowing the difference is important. You have to think about that, and I mean, that's really something you just learn as a human being throughout your career. It is fairly true about most of us, and I include myself in this almost all the time — that there's a good reason to be afraid about a lot of stuff, and then that feeling you have a fear is an important thing for you to be able to feel. It stops you from getting killed from time to time.

Like I'm afraid if I walk across that street, the car is going to hit me. That's a good fear to have, especially when the cars on the street are coming your way. But when you get into public policy or you get into running universities, for example, very often you're going to come into a situation that has conflict. How do we have that conversation with each other? We used to be able to do it better than we're doing it now, but we used to be able to talk to people we disagree with in a thoughtful but passionate way and get to resolution. We're out of practice right now. Now, the country's never ever been perfect, but we've better at it at other times. And the reason the Founding Fathers were in my mind, were just so brilliant, is that the way they designed the Constitution expecting that lots of people who were different were going to live together. That's like the whole point of it. Not just so that you can be with people that you like or that you agree with, but so that you actually have a formula for dealing with people that you don't like and don't agree with and don't have to go to war with.

That's why the Constitution is written the way it is. That's why it's designed the way it is. But from time to time there are certain issues, I think, that call you forth to do what it is that you're supposed to do, and the problem with speaking about it is that person's a hero. That person's courageous, or that person's something other than what I should be is it takes you away from the possibility that you could do that too. And so I want to say this to you: I'm afraid of a lot of things and as mayor and as a lieutenant governor, I was a legislative for 16 years too. If there was an issue that I was afraid of, I had to learn how to first acknowledge that I was afraid.

So this is a real process. This is what I do: If I'm afraid I go, I'm afraid and I write down what I'm afraid of, and then I write down why I'm afraid of it. And then may be five or six different reasons why you would be afraid of it, and then you put it in your drawer or put it on the other side of your desk and you come back the next day and say, I'm afraid of because... What winds up starting to happen is that the because kind of starts to go away because then you find that what you're really trying to do is evade your responsibility. And in some instances, it might be

something that you're afraid of and there are good reasons to do it, but more often than not, especially if an issue is really, really, really important.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) It kind of calls you forth to a point where you really can't look away, and then you kind of have to face yourself. Which is always the hardest conversation to have when you look in the mirror and you can't evade who is standing right in front of you and say, look, this is my responsibility. Am I going to walk away from it or not? And sometimes we do. Many times in my life I've done that, but there's many times where I've said, you know what, this is my responsibility and it's nobody else's. I can't put it on anybody else's shoulders and I have to do this. And the monuments was one of those examples. Now I went through that entire process, but I want to just tell you for a moment specifically how it happened.

When I got elected in 2010, the recovery had stalled. We were rebuilding the whole city. If anybody knows anything about mayors, you know that we are really frustrated designers. How the city looks, where the buildings are — Walton knows this because he put a couple of stores in our city. But when he came to see me, I said, you just can't, put bad stuff in my city. You got to build a nice building. The neighborhood that you build in it has to be ... Your building has to be reflective of the neighborhood. You have to respect the culture. Don't come here. I love Whole Foods, but you could go out on a suburban street and put an old nasty store — if you're going to come into the city of New Orleans, put something that reflects it. Now they did this anyway, and they're better than everybody in the country and I'm just blowing smoke at them.

They were really respectful of the neighborhoods that they built in. But so mayors think about that stuff. So as we were rebuilding the city, we were doing all of this stuff. The schools, the hospitals, the airports, the hotels. It occurred to me that we didn't have very many circles in the city of New Orleans. And I'm speaking — I don't know whether you have that many in Austin, but if you go to Washington, DC, you know what I'm talking about. If you go to Paris, if you go to Berlin — and New Orleans is a great historic city.

And so I was thinking about those public spaces. I was also thinking about getting the city ready for its 300th anniversary, and I needed to give the citizens of the city something to dream toward and work toward like an Olympics or World Cup. And so we picked the 300th anniversary. And so as we began thinking about all that stuff, we began to organize ourselves around art, music, historic preservation, architecture, and then how we were going to celebrate our 300th anniversary. And the people of New Orleans miraculously said, we're not going to build the city back the way it was, which is everybody's instinct when you've had a near-death experience. We're going to build the city back the way it should've been if we would have gotten it right the first time.

Now, that kind of takes you into a space where you've got to think about, well, if we didn't get it right the first time, why didn't we get it right and who didn't get it right and what would it look like? As a matter of fact, like why was New Orleans bigger than Atlanta and Houston in 1960, but dramatically smaller since? Those are tough questions to ask. The answer is somewhere like where we got out of the way politically in the business community racially.

Something happened where we became a descendant city rather than an ascendance city. So having that kind of discussion takes a lot of courage for people to have.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) And in the in that midst, I asked my friend who I grew up with, Wynton Marsalis, the great trumpet player and the great historian, to help me. And like a great politician, Wynton said to me, "Hey man," he says, "I'll help you. I'll do this for you, but you got to do something for me." [I said,] "Wynton, sure, what do you want me to do?" He said, "I want you to take down Robert E. Lee's statue." "Come on Wynton." I'm like, "That's not a fair trade. I just asked you to be on a commission." So anyway, I said to him, why would I do that? And he said to me very seriously, he said, "Well, have you ever thought about that statue from my perspective?" Now, if you've ever been a person and you know what it's like to get hit in the head with a 2 by 4, that's really what I felt like because I realized and not withstanding my whole family's history and the fact that I walk by these statutes every day, I never ever put myself in my friend's shoes. And my immediate thought, to be honest with you, notwithstanding all the accolades I've gotten for being courageous to taking the statues down, my original thought was to flee.

As a matter of fact, what came out of my mouth I can't repeat, but it was something like, hell no, I'm not doing that — have you lost your mind? Because I knew that the squeeze wasn't worth the juice. I mean, politically right away. I knew, I mean, my instinct was like, that's a massive fight. You're asking me to take up the last two years of my term into a massive fight that would be just crazy. But he did something else to me that only good friends can do to each other. He said to me, "Will you think about it?"

Now, if you ask a kid that was raised around the Jesuits, who's got a guilt complex, will you think about it? I said of course. I said, "Yes, I'll think about it." I didn't intend on thinking about it, but I did start thinking about it and my second reaction as a politician was, I'm not going to have to do this because this is somebody else's responsibility. It's not mine. I don't need to stop and give that person a dollar *[inaudible]* That's not mine. I don't need to — you understand what I'm saying? Right. You walk away, you turn away — that's your instinct, that's your default position. It was mine too, but I started thinking about it and Wynton said something else to me that made my head explode after he hit me with the bat — I've accused him of abusing me already, so he knows it — just with one question: Have you ever put yourself in my shoes? He said, did you know? Of course it's a question. The teachers know this. Did you know, like you dumb, you didn't?

So he said, did you know that Louis Armstrong left this city because of that? Now, when he said that everything that I tried not to pay attention to in civics class, professor, from the time that I was in third grade came flowing back into my brain right away, because I had given already a thousand speeches as a lieutenant governor about how we lost in the South our intellectual capital, our raw material, our raw talent — and I knew that 5 million American citizens were sent out of the South and they took away all the spectacular things, and the best example in the world was sitting in front of me. It was Wynton Marsalis, the greatest trumpet player in the

world, grew up right across the street from my house, had to go to New York to open Jazz at Lincoln Center. Eight hundred million-dollar building, 3,000 employees.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) All that stuff was in New York. With the raw talent that was born in New Orleans. What more evidence do you need to know that if you expel raw talent, raw material, intellectual capital, that you're going to be worse rather than better? And so when he told me that, I said, "Oh my God, I've actually been talking about this my whole life. So now I really got to think about it." So I started thinking about it and I said, I don't know if own that thing. I certainly don't want to get into fight with my legislature because it's like Austin fighting the state. It really is in Louisiana same thing — blue city, red state, same thing. But Congress ought to be doing it, not me. Well, come to find out I'm a lawyer I've been [*unintelligible*] for a long time that the city owns the property. That was like, "Oh, hell!" I realize we own the property, and then I had to figure out, well, who put it up and how'd they get it up, and let me figure that out, so I started doing some research, had my staff — Zach's here — they're great folks. They went back, and they come back from the library, which was right across the street, and they hand me a bunch — a stack of documents. I'm reading what the historians have written. If something's going to be on the historic register, some smart historic people go back and they write the whole story about it, and you hope they get it right.

I start reading about it, and I'm reading, because I know the Civil War was between 1861 and 1865, that this monument wasn't put up until the 1890s. I know because I'm preparing for the 300th anniversary that the city of New Orleans was founded in 1718, before the rest of the country was here. So there was something there for a lot of years before somebody put this statue up. When people say, "Go remember your history," I'm like, "Well, which history are you talking about?" I said, "That's interesting. How far back?" Great question. You started an argument with me now, so now we're going to have it. Who got here first and when did they get here and whose property is this really?

You see, 3,000 years ago at Poverty Point in Louisiana, the indigenous Indian tribes were there, and they had a fairly sophisticated culture. I'm saying 3,000 years ago. You understand what I'm saying? For all the Christians in the room, you understand what I'm saying? This is before Jesus Christ was with us, so 3,000 years ago, there were folks hanging out in Louisiana, what was then going to ... I'm like, "OK, well, that's interesting. It's nice. Columbus mustn't have discovered America." You all are not following me here. You understand what I'm saying?

As you jump forward and start thinking about even [*before*] the city of New Orleans was here well before these statues were put up. How did this statue actually get put up? Who put it up? Well, there was this thing called the cult. Not my word — historians' word. It's not a pejorative word. It's an accurate description, the cult of the Lost Cause. I start thinking, next question. What's the Lost Cause? It turns out that, after the war — surprising to some — the South, the Confederacy, lost that war. The Confederacy lost the war. That is an established fact. We don't have to argue about that. The Confederacy lost the war.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) The people that lost were upset that they lost and felt that the cause for which they fought was a noble cause. Excellent. What was the cause for which you fought that was so important to remember? Well, the grandeur of the Confederacy. Oh, really? Well, what was the Confederacy really about? Now, here's where we get into really weird interpretations of history about how it was really an economic fight. We have *[done]* this for years, but the truth of the matter is — and I'm not saying it's not arguable — but the argument has been claimed is that the Civil War was fought to destroy the Union in an effort to preserve slavery, maybe for economic purposes or not.

Then I started thinking if the cause was lost, why is that cause worth revering? Because that's, in fact, what monuments did. Now, jump back. It's 2018. I'm the mayor of a major American city. It's a continuous government from 1718 to 2018. In 1890, or around there, Mayor Behan, who happened to be a Confederate, not that it was cooked or not, but the Daughters of the Confederacy went to go see the mayor, who was Confederate officer, and said, "Can I have a piece of property to put Robert E. Lee up to say that he was the greatest thing since sliced bread?" "Sure, it sounds great. All of my friends are for me. I'm going to put it up." There wasn't a commission. There weren't any votes. They just put it up.

It occupied the central space in New Orleans in a city that — you know, after Katrina. Everybody on the steps of the Convention Center, everybody on the steps of the Superdome, mostly African-American, gasped at the possibility of losing the soul of America that came from our diversity, our willingness and our ability to create gumbo, to create jazz. That is who we are. Our identity is out of many, we are one. Out of many people, we have become a stronger thing because all of the different things that come to us. Yet here's Robert E. Lee standing there — the guy'd never been in the city, by the way — in a central location in a place of reverence.

Now, I'm the mayor of the city. I'm getting ready for the 300th anniversary. I'm talking to people about telling the truth, being who we are, celebrating everything that makes us valuable, and it hits me like a ton of bricks that that's a lie. That thing right there happens to not be reflective of who we are, who we ever are — who we ever were — never got put up the right way. I'm now the mayor of the city that owns a piece of property, and I've been asked to think about it.

I got to the point where, in part of a racial reconciliation movement called The Welcome Table that we had where people were meeting — we decided to have a conversation with the people of New Orleans about the possibility of taking the statue down, and that's how the argument started, in a room just like this. I sat right there and said to the people, there were about this many people in the room, "We should start talking about taking those monuments down." Now, you would've thought that I stole everybody's children and ran away and said I'm never coming back.

I mean, it started a really, really, really difficult, tough discussion that went from soup to nuts that you can imagine — some thoughtful, some intuitive, some emotional, some irrational — that ended up with us having the authority to take it down but, essentially, I had a moment there, and I don't mind telling you about it, where I was really questioning whether it was the

right thing to do. I was seeking a lot of counsel and advice. I had talked to small rooms and big rooms.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) I was in a room of, I don't know, about 30 of the most close people to me that were also community leaders. The room was African-American and white and Hispanic and Vietnamese, male, female — and the room did not break down the way you thought. It wasn't all the white people on one side and all the African-Americans on the other side. It was actually split. There were people who said, "I'm not a racist," and they weren't, "but I don't want to take it down because I don't like taking things down. I like adding to them. Maybe we should put it in context in a different way."

Some people were like, "No, I want to leave them there because that's exactly what it reflects, like the Edmund Pettus Bridge. I don't want anybody changing them because I want people to remember all of the time." It was a very thoughtful discussion, and I was listening. I knew now that the city owned them. I knew now that it was our responsibility. I knew that if we didn't do it now, it would never get done.

One of the mothers said something to me that completely changed my mind and pushed me over the edge. She told me the story that she was not really in favor of taking them down — African-American businesswoman, but she was in New Orleans visiting, and she had her daughter in the back seat and they were driving down St. Charles Avenue.

The daughter says, "Hey, mommy, mommy! That's a beautiful statue. What is that?" And she says, "Robert E. Lee," and she says, "Who is Robert E. Lee?" "Oh, he was a great general, baby." "Really, really? What war did he fight in?" "Well, he fought in the Civil War." "Mom, wasn't that the war that got rid of slavery?" "Yeah, it was." She said, "Well, what side did he fight on?" The mama said, "Well, baby girl, he was for the Confederacy." She said, "Well, mama, isn't that the side that didn't think that I had a right to be free?" The mother said, "Yeah." Then she said this: "Why is he up there?"

Now, I — when she told me that, and I thought to myself, "Why is it?" I couldn't answer that question. Then, the more I thought about it, I started thinking about what am I going to tell my grandkids when they said, "Well, PawPaw, you were the mayor of that city, and that thing was up there, and you could've taken it down because it was yours. Question: Why didn't you?"

Because I couldn't answer those questions. Because of the diaspora, because of everything that we were going through, because of the city of New Orleans being an authentic, wonderful city whose idea is essential to the nation — out of many, we are one — and our diversity is our strength. And because we were preparing not to build the city back the way it was, but the way it should've always been, then all of a sudden it became completely crystal clear to me what the right thing to do was, and they gave me the ability to say, "You know what? We're going to go ahead and pay the price that you need to because it's the right thing to do."

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) I also believe that the people of this city wanted to do it, although the papers kept taking polls, but they would, interestingly, only take polls from the whole state, which is 70 percent white, so the polls were skewed. I knew what the people in this city wanted. Sixty percent of the people always wanted to take them down, so that's when with kind of moved forward and said, "You know, this is a bigger issue. The more important thing, though, is that in politics, *[inaudible]* knows this, the timing's important. It's really, really, really important, and you can't control the time.

We had been thinking about this for a long time, and it wasn't until the shootings in Charlotte at AME Church when those people were killed that it clicked in my mind that, you know what? We've had enough. Now's really the time to make sure that what we have in our property symbolizes what's in our heart, and it's critically important that we speak to this issue as a nation and we make sure that we make a statement that diversity is a strength, not a weakness.

As you know, Nikki Haley and Joe Riley took down the flag, and that's when I said to my team, "You know what? Now's the time to do it," which is what we said to the people of the city, and we went through what we went through. We took them down, and after we took them down, evidently, the same feeling was permeating the country.

I don't know that we started, but there was something else going on that was bigger than us that has now become part of a much larger conversation that's being tested, and I think that our side's going to win the argument because I think in our country, diversity is a strength. It's not a weakness. It is a uniquely American idea that we don't discriminate against people based on race, creed, color, sexual orientation. That notion's being challenged right now, and this has now become part of that much larger fight for the nation as we try to find our real identity as we go forward.

EVANS: This is ... What you've actually recounted is a big part of this book. What I'd like the students here to hear from you is ... They're young, they're starting off, and a lot of what you just told us is a combination of many of your experiences when you were young in terms of your Jesuit upbringing, your dad and mom, Moon and Verna, who were civic leaders, your neighbors who were African-American, your office. So the culmination — you're talking about timing, the window of opportunity. Here we had a man who was in a place at the right time in the right place, and that took a lot of your whole history.

When you have young people starting off, what kind of advice do you have for them? You gave them some that was, I think I'm hearing, is one, listen; two, do your homework, get your information right — we didn't know about the cult of the Lost Cause until you said, "I want to know about this." The other is persistence, step in and know that ... I really want the students to hear about what made you ... What do you think made you be able to act that way at the time you needed to act?

LANDRIEU: That's an excellent question, and I'll try to give you some constructive thoughts, the most important of which is that every one of you is a very special person. We have a tendency

to make people heroes. I think we do that sometimes by saying, "Well, I'm not really that way, so I don't have to do that. Those crazy people can do all that crazy stuff. I'm not really that." That's really not true.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) You know, after Katrina hit, when I was in the water rescuing people, it was because the government failed to prepare adequately, but when I was in those boats rescuing people, the most astounding thing were the other people who were regular citizens that were doing extraordinary things that nobody expected of them. As a matter of fact, most of the leaders of the civic organizations and the government leaders, they left. The people that stayed behind were just really, really, really what we would all consider to be regular folk. As a matter of fact, some of [them were] the kids in the neighborhood that you would walk across the street from because you'd think they'd hit you on the head.

It was amazing to see the kind of leadership that comes out of everyday human beings all the time, which is a long way of saying is that you have it in you. You just have to find it, and you have to be willing to exercise it. You don't need to be Superman every day. The fact of the matter is I made so many more mistakes in my life than I get right, I've done so many wrong things that I wish I would've fixed.

But when, for example, you're in a room with people that look just like you and you're talking about somebody else that doesn't look like you, do you have the courage to say to your friends who you think are going to ostracize you, well, that's not my experience because that person you're talking about a good friend of mine, whether they be a person of color, a woman or, if it's a room of women, a guy, when you have the courage to tell your friends without fear of being ostracized or put out of your group what the truth is based on your experience.

In this book, for example, this gentleman's got a picture of Dr. Norman Francis on his lap. Dr. Norman Francis is the longest-serving president of HBCU. He just retired last year. He was my daddy's best friend so, from the day that I was born, my father's best friend was African-American, and Ms. Blanche — that was Norman's wife — and my mother, Verna, they had bunches of kids together. So I grew up with their kids. My personal experience was growing up with African-American kids who were smarter than me, better-looking than me, faster than me, better baseball players and tennis players, etc., etc. — you get the picture — and they've all grown up. All the Francis kids are doing spectacular things.

My personal experience was a certain way, so when I went to an all-white high school and they were speaking poorly of African-Americans, I would be like, "Well, that's not my ... Not only am I taking up for my friends because I don't like you talking bad about my friends," which is important, you should stick up for your friends. My experience was different from their words, so the question is, do you kind of, just like in that setting, that little bit of courage that it takes to say, "I don't know what you're talking about. You're wrong. That's not my experience. Why are you talking like that?"

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) Locker room talk, for example, and I don't mean that in a funny way, but you know you talk different when you're with people that are just like you. You ladies do it. The talk at the ... That's true. When you're at the beauty parlor, the way everybody talks, like the guys at the football game, and then we talk different when we're together, and African-Americans talk different than whites when they do. In that context, when somebody's geehawing on somebody else, do you have the willingness to say, "That's not right."

That kind of idea, that thing, that plays itself out when you go to work. You're at work, and you're in a meeting with your colleagues and somebody says something out of the way, do you check them and say, "With all due respect, that's really not the way we think here," or better, ask a question: "I'm sorry. Is that viewpoint consistent with our principles?" Oh, by the way, here are our principles. They're actually laid out.

You know the one about integrity? Does what we just said ... If you get into the practice of doing things like that, we can each check each other and help each other, because each of us will get out of the way from time to time, and that kind of ethos helps you kind of become better institutionally.

Now, from time to time — this is just kind of the way it works — and then these people are the saints. The Dr. Kings and the Mandelas, they get put in situations where almost every human being in the world would fold except for them. Where they get that from is by the grace of God and, you know, you pray that you'll have it if you're ever called upon to do and hope that you never — but I think we can practice being better with each other. That's kind of what happened when I grew up.

When I grew up — and I tell this story in the book — I went to a pretty much all-white, but there were a couple of African-American kids that went to Jesuit High School, and some of my white friends, later in my life, when they said they wouldn't come to my house and I asked them why and they said, "Because you lived in a black neighborhood." I said, "I didn't live in a black neighborhood." I said, "Why do you say that?" They said, "Because you have black people in your neighborhood." I said, "Well, having African-Americans in my neighborhood and living in a 'black neighborhood'" ... Come on people, you know what I'm talking about.

It occurred to me that my definition of living in a diverse neighborhood, a mixed neighborhood, an African-American neighborhood was different from my friends — and you know what? It wasn't that different from the 1/32nd rule, [and] all the paper bag tests back in the day. If you had 1 ounce of black blood — 1 — you were all black, and you didn't get entry into anywhere that you were going.

You know, that thing has spilled out over the top, so when people say that slavery and racism are not still here with us today, yes, they are because the worst thing, when people were trying to beat me to death about taking these things down and they were trying to stop me, the worst thing they could say about me or that they tried to say about me is that he's doing it because he's really black, as though that you'd have to be to understand the nature of discrimination.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) They were saying that because my great-grandfather's mother was evidently half African-American, and she married a white guy, so I think I have black blood.

People were saying to me, "Oh, that's why he's doing it because he's having black blood," like it was embarrassing so me. It would be a great honor, by the way, just in case anybody wants to know. By the way, most people in New Orleans and most people in the South — you may not want to admit this to yourself but if you go do your little thing, you may find out things about yourself you don't want to know. My greatest fear is not that I'm going to have black blood. My greatest fear is I'm going to be a descendant of King George or something like that, right?

When you're from New Orleans and you learn how to celebrate diversity and love and you've grown up with other people and you know that love is the connector, that's what's transcendent over time. That's the thing that transcends history and time: being able to see somebody for who they are, not what color they are. That's a platitude for most of us but, if you live in the real world and you look at a child and you see what's coming out of their eyes and you can't deny that child's humanity, it's only when we grow up where we really start separating people.

You all know that song from "South Pacific?" Does anybody know that song I'm talking about, "You've Got to be Taught?" You want to know the truth? Listen to the poets and the playwrights. The truth's all there. Go read a little Shakespeare. The lyrics of this song ... Maybe you all are too young. This is too young a crowd for "South Pacific." Where the old people? Cappy, raise your hand. You remember "South Pacific," right? You remember "South Pacific?"

There you go. See, I wanted somebody to out themselves. Listen to these lyrics: "You've got to be taught to hate and fear. You've got to be taught from year to year. It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear. You've got to be carefully taught. You've got to be taught before it's too late, before you are 6 or 7 or 8, to hate all the people your relatives hate, you've got to be carefully taught." Now, that was a hit Broadway show back in the day, a long time ago, and that same iteration has played itself over time.

Where do you think our kids learn how to hate? What kind of poison do you think is being put in their ears right now with this public discussion that we're having? Which is why, in my opinion, the thing that we're facing right now is not whether you're a Republican or a Democrat. Forget about that for a minute. Forget about whether you're conservative or liberal. You better start thinking about whether you believe in democracy or not. That's the big issue that's facing the country right now.

(applause)

It's a discussion, teachers, that you should have in your classes with your students. Like, do we want to be a democracy or do we want to be an autocracy? That's a legitimate question now. Do we believe in socialism or do we believe in capitalism? That's an interesting que— or do you believe in nationalism, isolation? Do you believe in white supremacy or do you think that that's

something that we ought not talk about because people are actually talking about that now. By the way, this just isn't in the United States of America. This is not just a U.S. problem. This is an international problem where this issue's being litigated.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) In the book, I write about David Duke. I write about David Duke not to scare you, but because when he ascended to prominence in U.S. politics in 1990, he did it in Louisiana. At the time, he was younger, he was attractive, a great public speaker. He was speaking in code, but the code was that white people are superior to African-American people. That was the message. That had to be confronted. It had to be called out. It had to be dealt with. It had to be litigated and we, the people had to make a decision that it's not the way we wanted to go. In other words, it just didn't run away and go back under the rock.

What's happening now in America is not going to run away and go back under a rock. This is a civic fight that we have to have about who we are. The issue has been raised. Don't walk away from it. Just have the argument. America will do the right thing. It'll take us time to retrench from where we are right now, but it won't happen by accident. It won't happen by an affirmative decision of the American people to say things like, "The Civil War was fought to destroy America for the cause of preserving slavery." That statement should not be a contested statement any more in America but, evidently, it is, so we have to make the statement again.

No. 2, America is an idea. The idea is, we all come to the table of democracy as equals. We don't discriminate based on race, creed, sexual orientation, etc., etc., etc. And, yes, we believe in our country, but we are not nationalists and isolationists. We're part of an international community, and freedom is our calling card to the world. That's who we are. Whatever else you all want to fight about that falls in that circle, that's fine, but let's go ahead and redefine our circle of friendship, and then we can get on with how America can be the greatest country there was ever supposed to be.

(applause)

EVANS: I can listen to you, and we can go on, all afternoon. I do want to give some opportunity to the students or faculty in the audience to ask the mayor any question that he or she would like. It's hard to see. There's a person with a mic here.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: I was just wondering if you could tell us what happened with the crane and the story of the brave person that came forth to finally do the good deed.

LANDRIEU: What happened to the ...

EVANS: With the crane. How did you actually get the crane and who did you get to come?

LANDRIEU: Well, actually, it's confidential, and we couldn't tell anybody because we didn't want to put people's lives at risk. Essentially, what we had to do — and this is just really sad — is that we had to raise and spend a lot of money to create a security perimeter so that nobody

was killed when those [*inaudible*] were put down. What was prescient, unfortunately, was that some months later in Charlottesville, you actually had somebody die, and we needed to take extra serious precautions because, without going into all of the details, security on the highest level — federal, state, local — said these are imminent security threats.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) You actually have to keep everybody's identity confidential so that they do not suffer personal harm or physical harm or that their businesses don't actually go under, because people threatened the first couple of people with never doing business again. We had this process that we went through. We did, through a whole bunch of different means, find a crane because mayors can do things like that. But it took a while, and we actually got people to do it. You'll notice that we got criticized roundly by the opponents for taking down the statues at night because they think we were trying to hide.

Well, first of all, the people who took them down were cloaked in anonymity, but the reason we took them down at night was because we were worried about sniper fire, and it was more secure to take them down at night. One was taken down during the day, and the only reason that one was taken down during the day is because, for security purposes, it's around Lee Circle. That's where the streetcars go. There was no way to get the streetcar lines down and the crane not to hit it so somebody wouldn't get electrocuted, so we had to do it in the light of day, but all the security personnel said, "If you want to protect the safety of citizens and the people, you have to do it at night, and it has to be anonymous."

They'll remain anonymous so that they don't have any repercussions, but that's where we were, if you can imagine that in the second decade of the 21st century, which is sad, and it shouldn't have to be that way, but the people at that time were now trying to stop an official government action. How do you define threatening people with violence to stop an official government action?

What would you call that, professor? I would call it terrorism, and that's what we had. We had domestic terrorism threats, so we had to do it that way. Hopefully, as time goes on, when we litigate these issues more publicly, that we won't have that kind of difficulty, although you've seen it play itself out now a couple of times in different cities. I would just say, just like with hurricanes, life is always the most important thing to protect. Property can be damaged. You can fix that, not somebody that gets hurt — and we shouldn't be hurting people in democracies who disagree with us anyway. But the people that did, that would be unbelievably courageous, and have our undying gratitude. Yes, sir.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: While you were in the midst of this engagement, what other institutions were your allies, and in particular could you speak to where the religious institutions or the church stood in this?

LANDRIEU: Excellent question. I'm going to use the wrong word — you have your faith in people tested when you do this. I relied a lot on Martin Luther King's letter from Birmingham; I'll recommend you to go back and read it. Martin Luther King was not loved when he was

killed. For all the kids that did hear that now we review him every day. That didn't use to be, like people just didn't say, "let's name some Martin Luther [King] Boulevards." For the older folks, and you can remember when we tried to do that and it was awful. And by the way the last six months of his life, if Marian Wright Edelman who was his one of his best friends who's told me the story is correct, he was despondent because he was hated. In the letter from Birmingham, what he says is that the people who was most disappointed in, were not the haters; it was the moderates.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) The people who should have been with him when they want African-American friends that didn't show up, white liberals that said, they really wanted to do something that people who didn't speak, right? I found in trying to kind of get people to help me the political mistake that I made was really one of hubris. I thought everybody was where I was, when I was ready to take them down. And I didn't realize that people needed to come along further. Some people would never going to come but I was really shocked at a lot of members of the community that either didn't see what I was trying to do or get to where I wanted or should have been there and hit. Let me just leave at that without calling out any names, but that definitely is true.

That's going to happen when you have major events; just be ready to be, you know, upset by your friends. Get ready to get surprised by people that you never thought existed, that come up to you and say, "I am with you 100 percent." You like, really? All right, I got a friend. That happened a lot too and it didn't follow around my reason. It was weird — it wasn't about race and class, it wasn't about religion. It was just like people either will call to it, or [are] called away from it. There were a lot of people that were afraid, because they didn't want to get ratted out in cocktail parties that they went to. Wealthy white people who were talking bad about the Landrieus because we ruin the city by letting African-Americans in — those kind of cocktail parties, the country clubs where some of us don't get invited to, where your name is... Nobody, even when they were your friends, will [be] like, "I don't want to be around you." So I had a lot of that.

The faith-based community, incidentally, especially the African-American pastors, were spectacular. There were some white pastors that were spectacular too. Shawn Anglim, then, being one of them, who right now is in the midst of the immigration debate. There were a couple of pastors who were white; that were there early, but because their congregations... well, think about this at church when you're praying and you ask him what would Jesus do? And Jesus would keep him up in this church. So the past that was stuck, you understand what I'm saying? Get — can I say that again? The pastor was like there and then when he went back to church on Sunday, his congregants was so furious that we were taking down this statue. A statue, which sought to repress people and keep them in bondage, that their view in their church was they didn't want their pastor to be involved in it.

There were one or two pastors that came to me very quietly and very privately and said, "I can't, I just...I can't hang with you." I felt — I was not mad at them, they did what they could do. You can only do what you can do. There are certain people that are just where they are; they

have to be there, and politics when we're putting the votes together — we call this giving people room. Finding a way to get this. So this is just a — this is hard-core political lesson, you might find this a little bit crass.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) But if I was in the legislature putting votes together for a certain thing, and I knew it was really tough, and I had a person of great courage, but I didn't need the vote, and didn't need them to fall on the sword; I didn't need to give them the political career because I had extra votes. I was like, look, vote the other way to protect yourself, because we're going to need each other later. [It's about] giving people room.

That's another way to get to, yes. It doesn't always have to be running out there with a flag demanding that everybody go with you. If you can be smart and elegant about a solution, and let people save face and save their honor, do it that way. Don't demand that they stand there with you all the time, especially if you don't need them. They are no permanent friends and enemies; you may need them again. They may come back to you a couple years later and say, "You really let me offer that thing now I'm going to come be with you again." In other words, as my daddy would say when I would get beat politically and I was angry and frustrated; he was saying, "Don't worry about that!" He said, "Play politics in the future." Which makes you think like, "Where the hell is the future?" Then you got to figure it out because it's not that clear. But in politics, you hear the phrase a lot — there are no permanent friends and enemies. There're just permanent interests.

I have found that to be almost always true, but people's interests change too. I've always —he thing that about this whole episode that I've lived through, first of all, I'm shocked that I'm here. The speech I gave, I had just given to the people in New Orleans, I really weren't even thinking about you, I'm glad you heard it, and I'm glad I wrote the book. But it was weird, because I was a local — that was for a local audience. But evidently, the truth or an idea that you have no control over can take on wings, and there are lots of other people that might be thinking about. Which is why when you get back to courageous acts, you never know who else is doing the same thing you're doing someplace else. You might find a whole bunch of friends you never had, because ideas can spread as quickly as they do.

When you think through all of this stuff, at the end of the day — I would say, and this is why you asked me earlier how I'm doing; I'm doing great right now. I feel good, because I feel freer than I've felt in a long time. When you're in politics, you can't always say and do everything that you want. Well, I'm not in politics anymore, and I'm not an elected official. I think I tried as hard as I could when I was an elected official to do what I thought was right. I didn't always succeed, and I can't always say that everything that I did was courageous, but I feel better now, because I'm freer. I wonder what my life would have been like every day, if I would have felt like the way I live today. So I would say seek freedom without being theoretical about it. Really seek to be in a place where you can be who you are.

As I've said to people who talked to me about this: Diversity is strength; it is because you have to think of the country as a mosaic. Don't think about the country as black and white and brown

all coming together to create something that a color that we don't know. Don't think about it that way, think about each and every one of you, being unique and special in your own right, being a bright light, having a different color and when wound together, right? Call it interwoven, knitted together like your grandma used to do an Afghan. Your grandma used to do that — you know what I'm talking about. The boys may not know how to knit Afghans, but the ladies do. I do. When you knit it together like that, you come up with a mosaic. One color benefiting the next and then all of a sudden, you've got this beautiful thing that creates something bigger and better than the sum of just the individual parts.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) That idea is more important than whether or not we're trying to get black people, white people and brown people to be exactly alike, walk the same way, wear the same clothes. We're not trying to do that. We're trying to deeply and richly celebrate each other's respective cultures so that we can learn more and be better. That's a better idea, and that's really what the idea the Founding Fathers had in mind. Which is why this fight about the statue's now evidently so important. It essentially is the same strain that has been — we've been fighting over from the beginning about slavery, Jim Crow laws, civil rights and all the other issues that we have. If you stand in your strength and just be who you're going to be — have the courage to be that, have the freedom to be it, you're going to add great value to each other's lives; are we going to be better because of it. Yes, sir.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: You talked a lot today about what we've — what you've done, and how you how that has succeeded in various forms. Where do you think we could — you go from here? Where do we go from here continuing the fight? How do we not let it peter out and continue those momentums that has started from the statue debate?

LANDRIEU: Well, I don't — that's an interesting question. I don't necessarily see it as we started something, where's it going to end, and how do we keep the momentum up about the statues. This book is really not about the statues. This book is really about my experience of race in America. So the question is a bigger question, because now it's not just about race. If you asked me when I started this in 2014, what I think that we would be litigating on the national stage. Whether diversity was a strength in America, whether or not you could have a false equivalency of white supremacy with good-natured people that are trying to do the right thing. I would say, “that's insane.” We shouldn't be doing that in this country but the truth is, we are. The sad part about it: It's not the first time that we've seen it. I mentioned to you that we saw it in Louisiana in 1990 with David Duke. You saw this sense of governing in a certain way with Huey Long back in the 1930s.

You saw commingling of race, and some of this populism in 1960 with Gov. Davis and with George Wallace. So from time to time throughout our history, this part of ourselves — and by the way, it's all of us, it's not just some. It culminates in every indivisible piece of all of us; we have to put that side down. In other words, we have to continue every day. This is the answer to your question: Continue every day to make the right choice about moving toward what the principles are that we say, make the nation strong. It's like one of the things that helps me,

when I'm getting out of the way or I'm having a hard decision, the things are really coming fast. I really have to go check myself and say, Well, wait a minute, I don't — this is so confusing.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) What are our principles of governing again? What are our values? Then you ask yourself: Does this act take us toward that, or does it take it away? Are we kidding ourselves, looking for an excuse to do a thing that we don't want to do? Are we rationalizing? Why we should — does the end justify the means? So these are more bigger questions that don't lead you to what specific action you would take. But how do you get your head right to more often than not making a good decision, rather a bad decision? Here's another one. Walter Trout knows more about this than I do. Although I've made more mistakes in my life, you go back and you say, as you get away from things — and looking back and when you're older, you have the freedom to do this.

How many [are] bad decisions that are really making my life? What the heck were they? More importantly, other than just beating yourself up and lashing yourself, after you go to communion and confession and all the things that you do in the Catholic Church, you can ask yourself, what is the anatomy of a bad decision? Really, you can actually break it down and think about it that, if you go back and do this in your life. I've come to conclude that when I made bad decisions, I was either angry, in a hurry, not as knowledgeable as I should have been — I was afraid of something like somebody had threatened me, or I felt like I was going to lose a vote or something like that. I was under pressure from a lot of different things, or are really just didn't understand. Those are the reasons why you make it.

So the question gets to be, if you're — if you want to be a good leader, you want to put yourself in a place where those conditions of making a bad decision are less than the conditions of making a good decision, which is to not be angry. To be patient to know as much as you possibly can know, to have smart people around you who are giving you the best choices. You want to try to put yourself and your organization in a position where you have a choice between a good decision and a better decision. Now, that's — this is not theoretical. This is real, because when I became mayor of New Orleans, we had \$100 million holding up budget, which meant that I had to cut 22 percent on a budget and six months — that's catastrophically bad stuff. Every choice that everybody brought in my room was a choice between bad and worse.

Every decision I made for a year was between bad and worse. So people would come up to me and said, "You made a bad decision." I'd say, "Yeah, and that's good." "But what the hell's wrong with you?" I said, "Well, did you know what the alternative was?" That's worth thinking about as you go forward as a management tool, to the extent that you can set our control conditions in your life, so that you're in a better space rather than a bad space to the extent that you can. There emergencies that occur like fellow Americans [*unintelligible*]. It's a difficult thing to be in, but put yourself in it. Don't wait for the world to tell you where to go figure out where you want to go yourself, and that helps a lot as well. And who your friends are makes a big difference too — and the ones that are not.

EVANS: We have one more...time for one more question.

LANDRIEU: I'll shorten mine. I won't do two. *[crosstalk]* I'll try my answers though. I'm sorry.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: This will be a short one about politics. Your father was a transformational mayor of New Orleans. He brought African-Americans into government, and you remember the white reaction to that. But just a few years after that you were elected statewide in Louisiana as lieutenant governor and your sister was elected senator. My question is: When Mary tried to get re-elected, I think after three terms, she got 16 percent of the white vote. How can the Democratic Party make a comeback in the South to white voters?

LANDRIEU: Well I thought you said that was short! *[crosstalk]* Well, times changed. Both Mary and I — Mary is my older sister, and I'm one of nine. Mary's the first, I'm the fifth. I'm in the middle of a middle-child complex ever since but both of us ran statewide, and she got elected three times, and I got elected twice. Both times I ran, I got elected in the first primary. So the state voted for a white Democrat; this is the bigger point, without a lot of stretch. When President Obama was elected, it started to change the conversation in Louisiana. I happen to think it was mostly about race. Now my friends who did not vote for President Obama would say, "No it wasn't — didn't have anything to do with race."

I would say, while John Kerry ran four years earlier, by every indication, and under John Kerry like him, and he's a friend, but he is way left ideologically of President Obama. Who by all international and national standards, even on a good day has a moderate today he would probably deny it because he wants to be a progressive like everybody else. But by national standards he wasn't a Teddy Kennedy liberal; John Kerry was. Barack Obama was a middle of the country to the left but a moderate.

Nevertheless John Kerry when he ran against George Bush — George Bushes, right? George Bush beat him by — Kerry out did Obama in Louisiana by 14 points. So four years later Barack Obama runs, he's less liberal, happens to be African-American and you know what? Not so good.

After President Obama served one term, the issue of the Affordable Care Act was hot on everybody's mind. My sister was a great senator, and if she was sitting here today I would tell you that without her there is no city of New Orleans. By every standard of LBJ kind of politics, I'm sending money down there to fix my home state. Did he do that a little bit here? *[inaudible]* Johnson said he was he is it's when they've heard of earmarks, and they named things out the politicians because they sent money down here and you build them. Mary Landrieu generated billions and billions of dollars of federal taxpayers' dollars that she got to New Orleans and Louisiana so we could survive. She was terrific. But because she was so closely tied to President Obama and she was the vote on health care, the people of the city said state said, "You're Obama, you are out of here."

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) Forget the fact that we've been knowing you and everybody forever. I happen to think that the election was more about President Obama than her. Now, the South has gone completely red. You all are challenging that notion as we speak; you all are litigating that will know the answer to that in 60 days about whether Texas. I know you all consider yourself to be part of the South but some historians do. I don't want to get anybody in trouble by asking if you think you part of the South but let's just say, we understand. So you all are testing that right now Florida's testing and then of course, Georgia's testing it with Stacey Abrams running.

EVANS: But of course, it won't be *[inaudible]*.

LANDRIEU: How about that, good for you! What's interesting is just... we're talking hard-core politics and numbers here. Generally, the way it's worked, is when the African-American population or the minority population — now Hispanic, gets to be around 39, 40, 41, 42 percent, you'll begin to see a change in the kinds of people that are elected in whatever jurisdiction that that is. Off course then, the political battle started between the clear definitions of who's a minority, and the Hispanics and the African- Americans, the Vietnamese — that's going to be a whole new thing. The South, in my mind, is generally on ratio voting patterns. At least, if Louisiana is an indicator, about 10 to 15 years behind the rest of the country. My expectation is — this is an assumption on my part, not that people will perform in the future as they have performed in the past.

This could be accelerated. If, for example, Beto O'Rourke wins the Senate race, or if Stacey Abrams wins the Georgia race — not advocating one way or the other, just making a political observation as a scientist — that will exacerbate that progression. If they don't win, there'll be a retrenchment and then it'll take a little bit longer. But demography is destiny. So to all the white people in the room, let me speak to you just racially for a second — not that you need to be spoken to in this way, but I say this everywhere I go, just to the white people. In 2050, if this nation is going to be majority minority, that freaks some white people out. I'm not suggesting that anybody in this room is freaked out about it; you don't need to be freaked out about that. You do not need to be afraid of that.

This country has always found a way to get along and to open up space for each other. Which is why not discriminating against people because of race, creed, color, sexual orientation is important because you're not always going to be in the majority. You want to make sure that people treat you better than you treated them — you understand what I'm saying, just among us friends? That principle is an American principle. That's what makes us Americans. America is — it's not specifically a place, it's an idea, and an idea has coursed itself over time. Ideas [are] worth fighting for, which means that we have to all treat each other based on our individual behavior. We can distinguish between people who are good and bad based on our behavior, our words, our actions, and how we treat each other — not because of immutable characteristics that we cannot change.

(LANDRIEU CONTINUED) That idea, to me, that is like the essential idea — everything else revolves around that, because that essentially is the seed of freedom and liberty, which is, of course, what we're built on. When we're having this discussion right now about patriotism — what is a real patriot? What is a real patriot? Who deserves that definition? Do we have to move people toward a sense of false patriotism and false nationalism that excludes people and that discriminates? Or do we invite everybody to the table of democracy? I would just suggest to you that we're better as a country when the table's open.

We're better as a country when we give each other a lot of room. We're better as a country when we're celebrating our differences and expecting each other to disagree with each other.

When we really do respect individual liberty and religious liberty as well — we just better, because that's essentially who we are. I think that we're having this moment, and sometimes moments in history — so the history professors, they last a long time. Ten years is like a snapshot in history, but for us, we're living through it. It feels like the doctors got the needle in your arm. I would just caution us not that the issues of today are not emotional, but I'm not sure this is the worst time in a whole history. I think we've had other difficult times. I would say to people not to not be afraid, because there's a lot to be afraid of. But handle this level of fear with measure and handle it with purpose. Don't handle it with clap back, “Let's us be like them” kind of fear.

Let's have enough faith in ourselves to know that we're strong enough to celebrate our differences, and to move ourselves through this very difficult time in a thoughtful way, because there will be an end to it. There is absolutely going to be a way to get through whatever it is that you think we've gone through to get to the other side. But how we get there, whether we get there alive, how many people lose their lives along the way — I think it's a debatable thing. It requires all of you as I would like to say in my neighborhood, “be woke and pay attention.” This is a different moment; we are not in a regular moment. It's important for us to recognize that not so that we can overreact, but so that we can react appropriately, civically — thoughtfully and civilly but with the kind of passion that we should come to expect to be each other.

(applause)

Thank you all so much, appreciate it.

EVANS: Before you go, I want to thank all of you for coming, and just the fact that you're here says something about you. When you come, you learn, you get exposed to different people who have different ideas. Today we were blessed because we have somebody who's not only been there, rolled up his sleeves get into the arena, as we say, has gotten bloodied, but also [is] very articulate and very inspirational. So thank you all so much for coming, and thank you, Mayor. *[crosstalk]*

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