

## **Flehinger Clip 5 Transcript**

BRETT FLEHINGER: So let me reframe the question or make the more question-- think about it almost like collateral damage. Mencken's writing about a trial, but who is the collateral damage in what you're reading? Who else is going to get caught up in this?

And this is, in some sense, an identity question. So where are the microphones? Could I-- one for August, one for Michael, and then we'll go from there. Yep, there you go. August, since you've got, your go first. And Michael after that.

AUGUST: So in the set of three paragraphs on the second page, he's discussing the way in which Bryan is united-- what he characterizes as yokels. And he seems to be saying that the elites don't take this threat to them seriously enough and that-- he overestimates Bryan's longevity. But--

BRETT FLEHINGER: That he does. That would have been hard not to do at that point.

AUGUST: But the general idea of this movement will live on longer and the elites will be victims of this radical populism is the message. I also think it's interesting that he is discussing the way in which these yokels feel alienated and at the same time is describing them really cruelly. And it's like, where do you think that came from?

BRETT FLEHINGER: Exactly. No, exactly. That's the metapoint here, right? Once you call people yokels, that's not merely descriptive. If I say that Brett has a blue shirt on, I don't think I'm attacking. If I say that person with the idiot name has a blue shirt on, we may question your parents.

It's a brilliant name, though. And you've got the right spelling, so we're working there. Yeah, it's incredibly normative. Michael, you're on the same side, right?

MICHAEL: Yeah, so I think it's clear that he is harping on Bryan. But he's also harping on everyone who has ever, I think, voted for him or ever been a part of his movement. And it's--

BRETT FLEHINGER: Yeah, how would you nail that down on the paper as proving that with evidence? I'm with you, but I'm also feeling like that's a little bit unsecured.

MICHAEL: It's Bryan understands these peasants, and they understand him.

BRETT FLEHINGER: OK, keep going.

MICHAEL: And I'm trying to find- the fellow is full-- and the yokels hate with him, some of them almost as bitterly as he does himself. It's not just that he is sneering at Bryan. He's sneering at the populations that agree with Bryan.

And I think it's this interesting divide between a city man and obviously yokels being country people. It's this divide between cosmopolitans and the middle America.

BRETT FLEHINGER: Yeah, absolutely. No, it is. It's rural versus urban. It's elite versus common. It's cosmopolitan versus rural again. It doesn't it doesn't all map. It has these strict binaries. But you're absolutely right.

And what you did, Michael, or what I pushed you to do was basically take your intuition and lock it down with evidence. It wasn't that you weren't right. But if you put that in a paper, you're going to get unsecured from me, right? Why should I believe this?

And it's harder to be intuitive-- so that's also part of the practice of this.