

Hijacking Democracy Transcript

2/25/23 - 2:12 p.m.

Dan Gookin 00:00:00 ... get **Banducci's and McKenzie's into every elected position. So we have to fight that.** And the way you fight that is you let people know this is the one positive aspect of NIC because these guys are so awful. What we gotta say, like I said in the video, is here's your Banducci candidate, here's the McKenzie candidate. And hopefully that resonates with people. Cause you know, we, we got a plan for the collateral damage of what they've done to NIC.

[...]

56% of Republicans nationwide are okay with Christian Nationalism. So this has to be my fight cuz it's in my party. Um, but we have to let people be aware of it. And that's why I do the videos cuz I want people to know. **When you get that little card in the mail, it means don't vote for any of these bastards. And that's how we're gonna do it.**

Dr. David Adler 00:00:58 Thank you. So now you see why that question was directed to Dan <laugh>. Uh, so the, the problem is very, very clear. The impact in this room is understood. Uh, you and others are working to help the community better understand it. Uh, the some questions turn to strategies here. We've already taken a look at the recall issue. Theresa, uh, addressed that very eloquently. **Let's look at some other hardcore measures. Uh, 1, 2, 2 questioners wanna know, uh, what is the Hagadone Corporation, other corporations and power elites in the community doing to pressure these trustees? Any pressure being brought to bear? Second question. And this goes to the bylaws of the college. Uh, do the bylaws indicate how many members there are on the board of trustees? Certainly, probably does. What are the, what are the rules for expanding the size of the board of trustees leading to the possibility of electing more trustees?**

Dr. David Adler 00:02:11 And a and part of that question goes to the issue of, is it the case that the board of trustees must hail from Kootenai County? Must they live in Kootenai County? Could they not live elsewhere? This goes to the bylaws. And then finally, let's understand that great victories in American politics have been achieved through coalition building. It was not the case that Dr. Martin Luther King was able to overcome segregation...

[...]

...great, outreach effort to white Americans across the nation. And that's what the Freedom Riders were all about, heading into Mississippi in the summer of 64. And so, as Lyndon Johnson demonstrated repeatedly, the power of coalition building is what brought about the Civil Rights Act and Medicare, for example, in Social security. So when we look at those kinds of episodes as

instructions and lessons to be followed, let's ask the key question here, because you're all so enraged by the behavior of the trustees who are prepared to sink this college.

Dr. David Adler 00:03:23 What are their livelihoods? Where do they work? Do they own businesses? If they own businesses, if they run a restaurant, then you could all imitate the great Martin Luther King and Gandhi and others and, and simply create a boycott of their business. So you wanna know where do they live, not to where they live. Where do they work? Excuse me. And that is, that is political pressure. They own a clothing store. You own, you organize a boycott. So boycotting is what ended segregation on the bus lines in Montgomery in 1956. That's clear as a bell. When Gandhi led the boycott in England, excuse me, in, in South Africa in 1949 saying to the British, we want you to go home. And they wouldn't go. He said to his countrymen, we are not going to abide by the laws. We're going to sit down and wait to be arrested. The English, where all their capacity cannot build enough prisons to house all of us. And they'll leave. And he was right. So boycotting is a powerful tool to use in this very serious fight. So let me ask our speakers, do you know where these three trustees work? What's here? Christie, you would No,

Christie Wood 00:04:54 I, I do. Um, Todd has his own business. He sells, uh, life insurance, um, uh, security securities. Thank you. Although he has been, uh, sued over that. Um, the, uh, I think Wagner's retired. I believe he is. And Greg Mackenzie is a private contractor for the US Naval basic fa sound engineer.

Dr. David Adler 00:05:20 Okay, so first question. Thank you. I'm the first trustee who sells insurance. What is the name of the insurance company for whom he works? <laugh>. Listen, let me, I can see, hold on just a second, Dan, please. I can see there's some unease about this, isn't there? Well, no. Well, let me, I'm a professor. Let me just start with saying, this is why there's une. We don't like to have to resort to these tactics or techniques to win great causes, but by God, this is what's happened in American history. You have to resort to these techniques and tactics. So let's have the name of the insurance company where this fellow works.

Dan Gookin 00:06:03 Okay? So I don't support Boycotts. I don't think that's gonna work. You gotta understand these people outside of politics and their church, they are not involved in the community. A boycott will not work.

Dr. David Adler 00:06:16 Well, let me just, let me be the, uh, devil's advocate here. First of all, what is the name of that insurance company?

Audience Falcon.

Teresa Borrenpohl 00:06:26 Falcon Investments. <laugh>.

Dr. David Adler 00:06:28 There you go. You repeat that. What's the name of the insurance company?

Dan Gookin 00:06:31 How, how's that gonna work? I

Dr. David Adler 00:06:32 Don't think, just a second. I'm, and here's a question before we get into your resistance. And we like resistance cuz that's what we're talking about here. Please repeat the name of that insurance company.

Dan Gookin 00:06:43 Well, he, he calls it Falcon because I think that's the mascot of the Air Force. Um, but the thing is, his, his company is a joke. He makes his money from his father-in-law.

Dr. David Adler 00:06:54 So the same man who works for an insurance company,

Dan Gookin 00:06:56 No, no, no. His father-in-law has a lot of money or had, he's no longer with us. But that's where all his money comes from. He does not really rely on his business to get an income. And I, and again, I don't, I don't like the whole boycott thing. You wanna battle people in the field of ideas. And if your ideas are superior, you will win. If you're gonna resort to a boycott, I mean, and I understand in the civil rights thing, there are times, and with Ghandi there are times that a boycott will work. But this just seems really petty to me.

Teresa Borrenpohl 00:07:28 So, so one other piece of this cuz cause I I do appreciate, um, different types of resistance and making sure that, um, that when you inflict pain on the community, and that is exactly what's happening. I don't think that that should go unnoticed. Um, but I can tell you that in, um, the first NIC board meeting back after the elections, I don't know if any of you watched it, but, but, um, Todd Banducci actually did go on a bit of a, of a rant. Uh, it wasn't nearly as good as the ones we watch on YouTube, but it was a rant. And, um, and in that rant, he, you know, was almost brought to tears saying that he's not invited to Christmas parties anymore. He's <laugh> thank you that, that his business has suffered and that there are people in his complex that won't even talk to him anymore. So I actually do appreciate and want to point out that there has been pressure put on him and his business. Um, and there has been, um, uh, you know, some level of, I don't know, othering of him. Um, but once again, Wagner's retired and, um, and the other gentleman works for your, your taxpayers pay his his salary.

Christie Wood 00:08:44 Thank you. I think that your point is valid on strategy. So I wanna tell you about some of the strategies that have been going on. And I wish Christa Hazel was here to speak about. Same NIC. She's, her organization has been incredible. There are 501(c)3 that formed over this issue. You also may be, uh, aware of Friends of NIC, which is the actual, uh, political pack. And then Save NIC is the educational piece. Um, so they've done a ton of work and those businesses that you're asking about in the community, they stepped up and they've, they've provided funds for that work. And that work has been in the election and educating all of us about what the issues are at NIC. The other things that have happened, we've all kind

of just come together somehow because we're all feel the same way about the college.

Christie Wood 00:09:32 Uh, you have private citizens such as our retired, uh, city attorney Mike Gridley, who has filed a personal lawsuit against those three trustees and the attorney Art Macomber. That is a, that is a serious thing that's working its way through the courts. Uh, so far, uh, the college under their leadership has lost every legal challenge that's come along so far. Even having my subpoena quashed last week <laugh>, me and Ken Howard. Um, and then you have got, **I personally have filed criminal complaints and I'll continue to do that.** I'm not gonna get into a lot of detail about all of that yet. Cause I want, I like to respect the process and having those authorities review the details of the complaints. **But trust me, we're using every avenue to hold them accountable and we will keep after it.**

Dr. David Adler 00:10:29 Any, any other panelists? So here's the question. The, uh, yes sure. Just a second, Sarah. **So the question of your interest in employing lawful peaceful tactics depends how concerned you are about this issue. If it's merely a petty issue, you won't resort to boycotts and other, other tactics. And, but it's up to you to decide how badly, how much it is, how important it is for you to save the college.** If it's not so important to save the college, then you can just dismiss the kinds of lawful, peaceful boycotts that blacks employed, that women employed to achieve women's rights. Women didn't win the right to vote by staying at home. Women didn't win, uh, a lot of rights by staying at home. They boycotted, they marched. These are all lawful and peaceful, protected under the first Amendment, of course. **So that really is the question you all want to ask yourselves When deciding how to employ various tactics dealing with the trustees whom you view as destroying your beloved college. That's your question. If a college doesn't matter that much, then you won't resort to certain tactics and techniques. That's ultimately the question, Sarah?**

Sarah Martin 00:11:49 Uh, yeah, mine's pretty much a follow up to what I've said before of just speaking out, up and against this. Um, and not so much. Of course, we want the community as much as possible, but you know, what I have seen last year when I was chair, you know, a lot of people were upset and frustrated on, you know, the writings on the wall. We could see things kind of coming up and we knew what was around the corner. Um, a lot of people were frustrated and pissed and all that stuff, but they didn't feel comfortable with vocalizing that, even in a small confined group. Um, based off of that fear and retaliation, what I have seen this past year, because more people are becoming more and more aware of it. And there's more, uh, people being vocal internally at NIC and externally in the community.

Sarah Martin 00:12:35 Um, the fact that more people are speaking up, it's giving others the confidence and the ability to say how they feel and that they do not agree with what is going on. I have seen

some very, very brave staff, um, uh, over the past month and a half when we had some, what they called listening, not so listening sessions, but they, these staff who were, who don't like to speak up in general on anything, um, are now starting to speak up. And they're doing it with so much passion to where you can just feel their anger, they're, they're hurt and their concern about what is going on. So the more and more we speak up as a whole, it's just gonna get others to speak up more and more as well. So my advice externally and especially to my fellow, um, employees, staff, faculty, and to our brave students, um, keep speaking up.

Sarah Martin 00:13:37 You know, there is this motion right now lately when it's kind of noted in some of the board meetings, they're trying to almost deflect the blame on the accreditation. Instead of saying, even though it's very clear, it's the board, um, they're putting the blame on, you know, we all just need to work together. All parties need to be civil. Um, don't speak out and make waves because if you do, you're gonna be the reason why we're losing accreditation. It's the manipulation and gaslighting, um, that is going on and has been going on. But again, this is even more reason why to keep speaking up. **Okay, real quick, and I am gonna put him on the spot. There might be some other students in here, but I just have to give a shout out to one of our students who's been so brave in speaking up against Alex Elliot, please stand up.** Speaking up at board meetings, trust me, it's not easy. Um, but you deal it with passion and eloquency and, um, you are a true leader and I am so proud of you. Everyone is so proud of you for standing up and speaking up and doing what is right.

Dr. David Adler 00:14:57 Thank you. Thank you very much. I'm glad that you, you addressed that issue about speaking out because about four or five questions, uh, have asked how come the leaders in the community, corporations, et cetera, are not speaking out publicly, even those who are speaking, even those who do contribute financially to the college, why aren't they speaking out? You answered it. Courage is contagious, isn't it? Courage is contagious, faced with the loss of a lot of money in the community if the college folds, that encourages courage. That's right. Please, could you want to add some marks please? Just

Sarah Martin 00:15:34 One thing real quick. I'll make it terrific, I promise. Um, you gotta think about the cost and the risk of speaking up and not speaking up. **So yeah, there might be a cost if businesses speak up, you know, what kind of pushback are they gonna get from people in the community on against them in their business, potentially boycotting, you know, the reverse of what we were just talking about.** But, um, then you gotta think about what is the cost if they don't speak up.

Christie Wood 00:16:04 If I may just real quick add on to, I wanna give credit where credits due because this issue has been going on for quite some time and there are a lot of people working to

resolve it. Our chambers of commerce have spoke up. The Coeur d'Alene tribe has been there from the get-go. Um, the, um, certainly city council every chance we get. Um, and then who am I forgetting? Some of the school districts, the, the Press, the Press has been fabulous. And so, um, there are people that are fighting back and, and, but we need help. We need a lot of help. So,

Dr. David Adler 00:16:42 Great, thank you. I think there are numerous questions that go to this point. Let's move in a slightly different direction. Let's return to an earlier question and then is to ask, what are the bylaws say, can, how easy is it to expand the number of trustees? And secondly, do you have to live in Kootenai County to serve as a trustee? Could this not be a race of a broader proportion? Could it not be a race to serve, uh, to, to include people from around the state? Because then you could in fact bring into this whole question, people around the state who love education, um, it's very common for board members to live across the country for a variety of organizations at universities, at colleges, at nonprofits, by own board has, has people from around the country. So, uh, anybody know Christie, what that, what the bylaws say?

Christie Wood 00:17:39 I'll take part of that and then I'm gonna hand it off to Teresa. Um, first I wanna recognize one of our long-term serving trustees, Rollie Williams. We in the house today, um, trustees are like every other, uh, elected offices. They're controlled legislatively. And it is written into state law what compromises the board of trustees. And so there is one of the things I forgot to tell you about strategy is there is some effort, hopefully with this session, I don't know where it's going to go to actually, um, create some legislation that's a rescue clause that would, would preserve, uh, any community college in the state that is on a warning, a probation or show cause and their authority would revert to the Idaho State Board of Education until that situation was remedied. Dunno if it's gonna go anywhere. It seems like a simple idea, right? Um, but we're dealing with legislatures, so I don't know, it's really all, a lot of times it's about power and control. So, um, we are, we are at the mercy of the legislature as far as creating additional seats. And I don't remember the other half, but Teresa does

Teresa Borrenpohl 00:18:47 <laugh>. So the other half was, um, do the, uh, trustees have to be from Kootenai County? And the answer is, yes, they do. So, um, I'm gonna tell you a couple things. We're gonna dive in a little bit deep because I want you to know a couple things about the magic of a community college. So a community college is called a community college because the community came together and said, we want an educational resource in our area and we are going to pay property taxes in order to have that here. So when you, like, when a student pays tuition at North Idaho College, it costs \$140 per credit. At the University of Idaho, it's about \$350 per credit. The reason it's so much more expensive at a state university is because they only have two funding sources. They have the state and they have

student tuition, whereas community colleges have state student tuition and all of you good people who pay your taxes.

Teresa Borrenpohl 00:19:40 So it creates affordable access for students. And then they also don't have to pay for things like an apartment, for example. But because of that taxing district, it requires that there be a board. Every single taxing district in the county has a board and it only impacts our county. We're the only ones who pay for it. So if somebody from Bonner County wants to go to North Idaho College, they have to pay about \$50 more per credit because they don't pay taxes. So it's that, that's what a community college does. It decreases the cost for obtaining additional training. And so, um, because of that taxing district, the board members do have to come from Kootenai County. Some little fun facts. Every single board is a little bit different. But for the board of trustees, um, there's five different zones. And, um, every trustee is from a different zone, which is a geographical space within Kootenai County, but every single voter in Kootenai County votes for all of the trustees that are on the ballot. So if you live in zone one and the trustee you're voting for is in zone five, you're still voting for those trustees, even though they don't live in your zone, they represent all of Kootenai County, not just the people in their sliver. So that just gives you a little bit of background about why the board exists and, um, and how the, the ballot shows up.

Teresa Borrenpohl 00:21:05 That's a good question, <laugh>, I'd be happy to expand on that. So the question was essentially this, this last election, um, there was, uh, people running as a slate. Um, there was essentially the Kootenai County Republican Central Committee endorsed candidates and then there was, um, the logical people that were running in a nonpartisan manner because of the expertise that they brought to the board. And so the question is, how did Wagner, how was he the one person that avoided being, um, uh, elected as a slate? And I happen to have some privileged information from after the election that I would love to share with you cuz I actually think it's quite, um, interesting. But there's, there's two reasons why, um, after doing some after elections research that we think Wagner got in and not Brochet who had served on the board previously. And that's one of the reasons, um, Kootenai County said, oh my gosh, there is, you know, just craziness happening on the board.

Teresa Borrenpohl 00:21:56 We don't wanna vote for people that are currently on the board. And so that is one reason why possibly it didn't work out. Um, but another reason is because, um, when you run campaigns, you have to give people a reason to go to the polls. And a really good reason to go to the polls this time was that if even one person was elected, it would put Todd Banducci back in control. And as we've learned from um, Christie's story earlier, that's not a good idea as we've all seen it play out. And so, um, the campaigns went to bat said Banducci bad, Banducci Bad Banducci bad all over the place. They were, they were talking about how bad Banducci was. So people

went to the poll saying, we don't want that Banducci guy getting control. But Banducci wasn't on the ballot. Brochet another B name was.

Teresa Borrenpohl 00:22:41 And we found out in post, um, election surveys that that one piece people went to the, to the ballot to vote against that guy we kept telling him was bad. He wasn't on the ballot. So let that be a lesson to those of you who run campaigns. That was something we learned a really, really hard way. Um, is that all of it? I'm not a hundred percent sure, but when we did the post-mortem on the election, those were two reasons why people told us that they voted the way they did in that particular race. Yep.

Dr. David Adler 00:23:09 Thank you. These are wonderful questions. Keep them coming. Uh, so the, we discussed earlier, uh, the idea of uh, **making clear which businesses support the college, which don't, which want to oust the trustees, which don't.** One of your questioners wants to know, uh, which businesses are publicly supporting the college because they wanna support those businesses. This is a more affirmative way, maybe warmer to your heart, Dan. Yeah, yeah. Which, which businesses can you name a few that are publicly out there strongly endorsing the effort to save the college?

Christie Wood 00:23:47 **I guess I can't rattle it off the top of my head. I can tell you, I in general you have, um, the large Rotarian presence, almost all of them are business owners in all of the local Rotaries, the Chamber of Commerce,** they've come out publicly. Those businesses belong to the Chamber of Commerce. Has there been a tally, I think is what you're asking for something written where we could all look? I don't know that that's been done. Not a bad idea. Um, but I don't believe it's been done yet.

<Audience> 00:24:16 Tractor is one on,

Dr. David Adler 00:24:18 Okay, so it, it, I, let me suggest it would be a very good idea to draw up a list of those businesses that are publicly supporting the college. So you know where to shop so you know where to shop cuz you have choices as consumers. This is what consumer activism is all about. Secondly, here's a question I'm not familiar with. Which are the major grocery stores in this area? Who are they? Can you name one or two or three Super One, Albertsons, Safeway. Okay, so you've just named a couple. Thank you. Albertsons, Safeway, Fred Meyer, a couple of others. Have they publicly campaigned to save the college by taking on? The trustees have, is that a, that's a yes or no question. Have they publicly to save the college? **If there is one grocery store that comes out publicly to say, damn it, we are here to save the college. Would you support that grocery store?**

<Audience> 00:25:18 Yes. Yeah,

Dr. David Adler 00:25:19 There you go. So the, so those of you interested can approach the managers at the grocery stores to say, will you publicly support? That's a good idea this. **Cause if you do**

that, then one or two of you or 10 of you can buy an ad in the local paper and say, we are going to shop at grocery store X precisely because they have the courage to publicly announce they want to save the college. Do you not think a grocery store would like to have that ad? That's First Amendment activism. Who would take that up upon yourselves?

<Audience> 00:25:59 Ron McIntyre at Super One.

Dr. David Adler 00:26:02 Really? There you go. Okay, so this is political organization playing hardball. If you wanna save the college, that's the kind of, that's the sort of step you can take to find out which businesses are publicly speaking out to support the college and then you buy your Wheaties from that store and not others. Any comments here by our panelists?

Dan Gookin 00:26:31 Yeah, I like that idea because we wanna show support. Um, how about just, you know, imagine a window sticker in the business that says we support NIC. That would be good enough. I think you're here. Uh, yep, please.

<Audience> 00:26:50 I'm thinking of, um, auto dealerships that give their mechanics from NIC and the hospitals that get their, um, nurses and CNAs from NIC.

Dr. David Adler 00:27:02 That is a fine, very effective idea. Exactly, because it is plain to the strength of the college. They train mechanics, they, they train educate nurses and so forth. So all of those folks can certainly participate this and those auto, auto dealerships that have employed, uh, mechanics from uh, from the college can say we proudly support this cause, as Dan is saying, this is a positive campaign, isn't it? It's a positive campaign. It could be

<Audience> 00:27:33 A huge page ad and all those business names.

Dr. David Adler 00:27:35 I think the newspaper would like you to buy that huge page ad I just, just going out on a limb here. I'm just thinking they might like that. Sarah, what do you think about this?

<Audience> 00:27:47 They might even give us a discount on it.

Sarah Martin 00:27:50 I, I think it's a really good idea. Um, and as, as we were talking about it, you guys are talking about it. Um, you know, I, like I said, I work for the health crews over at the Workforce training center. So our programs deal with like the medical assistant, apprenticeships, CNAs, um, other types of healthcare related. So not just for the hospitals but for like the long-term care facilities and stuff like that. So, um, I really like that idea. Um, and just kind of maybe put a little note on my thing of something that maybe follow up on Monday.

Christie Wood 00:28:22 And I, I would just wanna say out of fairness that Kootenai Health has been a strong supporter. They have

tried to hold the board accountable. They have written public letters, um, demanding that the board keep their accreditation,

<Audience> 00:28:36 The law enforcement.

Teresa Borrenpohl 00:28:40 I'm gonna call it somebody in the audience real quick cuz Jessica just saw your hand up. So I wanna make sure you get heard.