Transcript of Press-Trump Exchange from the Podium, Trump Tower lobby, August 15, 2017.

Transcription begins after Trump has finished readings his prepared statement and calls for questions. Transcription ends when Trump walks away from the podium.

DT is President Donald Trump.
R1 is believed to be ABC News White House correspondent Mary Bruce.
R2 is believed to be New York Times Washington reporter Maggie Haberman.
R3 is believed to be CNN reporter Jim Acosta.
All other reporters (e.g., R4, R5, R6) are individually identified across the transcript but unknown.
Rx is unidentified reporter. Subscripts (Rx1, Rx2) are momentarily individuated but unknown reporters.
Rs indicates multiple reporter talk, usually of indeterminate initiation, duration, and termination.

Transcription Notation:
Brackets [ ] indicate points of overlap in talk.
Equal signs = = indicate a continuous stream of talk by one speaker or immediate end of talk and start of talk by two different speakers.
Colons : indicate stretched sounds.
Inverted arrows > < indicate content that is speeded.
Dashes - indicate cut-off words.
Words in ALL CAPS are spoken loudly.
Underlining indicates stressed words and sounds.
Single parentheses with a dot ( ) indicate brief pause. Numbers in parentheses (1.0) indicate timed length of pause.
Single parentheses with no content ( ) indicate talk whose content cannot be determined. Single parentheses with content (to defy) indicate uncertain hearing of content. Single parentheses with space as well as content ( content ) indicate indeterminate as well as uncertain talk.
Double parentheses (( )) indicate transcriber descriptions of audio or visual events.
Punctuation marks--Sentence initial capitalization, commas, and end of sentence periods . -- indicate intonational patterns and do not necessarily correspond to grammatical requirements of sentence structure.
Except for some colloquialisms of contraction and phrasing, transcription of the talk has been rendered into standard American English spelling and sentence format.

Transcription was based on the following videos:

*ABC News* (2017, August 15). President Donald Trump full remarks at Trump Towers: Remarks on Charlottesville, infrastructure (video). URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwIU7iUfhhow](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwIU7iUfhhow)


*NBC News* (2017, August 15). Trump's full, heated press conference on race and violence in Charlottesville (full) (video). URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGkBFa7HW-U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGkBFa7HW-U)


*White House* (2017, August). (Video of Trump Tower press conference.) Retrieved from URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alc_x49hLuw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alc_x49hLuw) (White House video no longer posted.) Still available at: *The Oregonian* (2017, Aug. 15). Trump reverts to blaming 'both sides' for Charlottesville violence. (Posted from White House.gov). URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsR1hBkNTuQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsR1hBkNTuQ)
01 DT: If you have any questions uh please feel free to ask.

02 R1: Why do you think these CEOs are leaving your manufacturing council?

03 DT: Because they’re not taking their job seriously as it pertains to this country. And we want jobs. Manufacturing in this country. If you look at some of those people that you are talking about, they’re outside of the country. They’re having a lot of their product made outside if you look at Merck as an example. Take a look [where- Excuse me. Excuse me.]

04 Rs: [ ( ]

05 DT: Take a look at where their product is made. It’s made outside of our country. We want products made in the country. Now I have to tell you, some of the folks that will leave, they’re leaving out of embarrassment. Because they make their products outside. And I’ve been lecturing them, including the gentlemen that you are referring to, about you have to bring it back to this country. You can’t do it necessarily in Ireland and all of these other places. You have to bring this work back to this country. That’s what I want. I want manufacturing to be back into the United States so that American workers can benefit.

06 R1: Let me ask you [(a different way)] why- why did you= [ ]

07 Rs: [ ]

08 R1: =wait so [long to (blast) neo-Nazis?] [ ]

09 R4: [Wh- Why do Nazis like you?]

10 DT: I didn’t wait long.

11 R4: Wh- Why[ do Nazis] like you?= [ ]

12 DT: [I didn’t wait [ long. ]]

13 R1: [two days] =two days

14 DT: I didn’t wait [long. ]

15 R1: [You waited] forty eight hours= [(That’s pretty)long time]

16 DT: =I wanted [to make suR::e,] unlike most politicians, that what I said was correct. Not make a quick statement. The statement I made on Saturday, the first statement, was a fine statement. But you don’t make statements that direct unless you know the fact. It takes a little while to get the facts. You still don’t know the facts. ( ) And it’s a very, very uh important process to me. And it’s a very important statement. So I don’t want to go quickly and just make a statement for the sake of making a political statement. I wanna know the facts.

17 R7: Do you have [to ( ) to defy] White supremacists?

18 DT: If you go back to my- in fact-] [I brought it. I brought it.

1 Many transcripts circulated by news outlets begin R1’s question with the customary deferential address form, "Mr. President." No initial address form is audible on any recording.
19 R2: Was it terrorism?
20 DT: I brought it.
21 R2: Was it terrorism?
22 R1: [What did you bring?
23 R5: Mr. President- [What did you bring?
24 R1: [(what is) it-
25 DT: As I said on, remember this, Saturday, “We condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence. It has no place in America.” And then I went on from there. ()
26 Rs: [[[ CLAMOR ]]]
27 R1: = [and on many s:i:des]
28 DT: = [thing. As to- Ex]cuse me. Excuse me. Take it nice and easy. Here’s the thing. () When I make a statement, I like to be correct. I want the facts. This event just happened. In fact, a lot of the event didn’t even happen yet. As we were speaking. This event just happened. Before I make a statement, I need the facts. So I don’t want to rush into a statement. So making the statement when I made it was () excellent. In fact, the young woman, who I hear is a fantastic young woman, and it was on NBC,
29 Rx: Have you called [( )]
30 DT: [HER MOTHER] wrote me () and said () through, I guess Twitter, social media, () the nicest things and I very much appreciated that. I hear she was a fine, really actually, an incredible young woman. But her mother, on Twitter, thanked me for what I said.
31 R1: But- White nat[j]ionalists [ ( )]
32 DT: [And honestly if the press were not fake and if it was honest, the press woulda said what I said was very nice.
33 Rx: Mr. President
34 DT: But [unlike you and unlike-]
35 Rs: [[[ONGOING [CLAMOR ]]]]
36 R4: [Nazis- ( )] [that Nazis were [there]
37 DT: [Excuse me. (.4 sec) Unlike you and unlike the media,] before I make a statement, I like to know the facts.
38 Rs: [[[ONGOING CLAMOR)]]
39 R4: Why do the Nazis like you?
40 R1: The CEO [of Walmart ( )
41 R4: Why do Nazis like you ( )
They don’t. They don’t. They don’t. (.) They don’t.

[They don’t.]

If you look (his) was (right where they were) [Richard-

[how ‘bousa couple of-

Richard Spencer has praised you, David Duke was [there

[Mr.-]

[Mr. Trump, was it terrorism, that event?]=

[How’bout a coupla infrastructure questions]

[Was that terrorism?]

[The CEO of Walmart] said you missed a [critical opportunity

[Say it. What? (looking at R1)]

The CEO of Walmart said you missed a critical opportunity to help bring the country together. Did you?

Not at all. I think uh the country- Look. You take a look. uh I’ve created over a million jobs since I’m president. The country is booming, the stock market is setting records, we have the highest employment numbers we’ve ever had in the history of our country. We’re doing record business. We have the highest levels of enthusiasm. So the head of Walmart, who I know, he’s a very nice guy, was making a political statement. I mean-

[(Ongoing Clamor)]

[If you had to do it [all over again how would you do it?]

[All (this) (begins)] the ( ) right. [They come-

[I’d do it the same way.]

And you know why?

(If you had to do it) all over again?

Because I want to: (1.2) make sure, when I make a statement, that the statement is correct.

Why [did you (wait two)

[And there was NO

WА:::y, (1.3 sec.) There was no way of making a correct statement that early. I had to see the facts, unlike a lot of reporters

[(Ongoing Clamor )]

[Mr. Philip]

[You said] a lot of reporters] [were there]
DT: Nazis were there. In fact everybody said, his statement was beautiful. If he would've made it sooner, that would have been good. I couldn't've made it sooner because I didn't know all of the facts. Frankly, people still don't know all of the facts.

DT: It was very important to me to get the facts out. >And correctly. Because if I would of made a fast statement and the first statement was made, without knowing much other than what we were seeing. The second statement was made after- with knowledge, with great knowledge.

DT: There's still things that people don't know. I wanna make a statement with knowledge. I wanted to know the facts. Okay.

DT: Well, I think the driver of the car is a disgrace to himself, his family, and his country. And that is:- you can call it terrorism. You can call it murder. You can call it whatever you want. I would just call it as:; the fastest one to come up with a good verdict. That's what I'd call it. Because there is a question, is it murder? Is it terrorism? And then you get into legal semantics. The driver of the car is a murderer. And what he did was a horrible, horrible, inexcusable thing.

DT: I never spoke to Mr. Bannon about it.
(But) can you tell us broadly what your v- Do you have- still have confidence in [Steve?]

[Well, we'll see and,

Look. Look. (.) I like Mr. Bannon. He's a friend of mine. But (.) Mr. Bannon came on very late. You know that. I went through:: seventeen senators, governors, and I won all the primaries. Mr. Bannon came on very much later than that. Uh and I li:ke him:. He's a good man. Uh, he is:: not a racist, I can tell you that. He's a good person. He actually gets a very unfair press in that regard. (.) But, we'll see what happens with Mr. Bannon. But, he's a good person and I think the press treats him frankly very unfairly.

[Have you] called on the [ ]

Do you have confidence in [him?]

Senator McCain has called on you to defend your National Security Advisor, H. R. McMaster, against [th( )s attacks.]

I've already done it.] I did it the last time.

And he called on (it) again, linking the [ ]

[ ]

saying] it's the alt-right, and [saying he's (the-)]

[Yessssssss ]

Senator McCain? [Senator McCain?] You mean the one [who voted] against uh Obamacare?=

=And he said [that]

[ ]

Who is Senator McCain who voted against (0.6 sec) [us] getting () good healthcare? [Yeah]

[ ]

Senator McCain [said ] that the alt-right is behind these attacks, and he linked that same group to those who perpetrated the attack in Charlottesville. [So (you)]

Well, [ I- ] I don't know. I can't tell you. I'm sure Senator McCain must know what he's talking about. Uh but when you say the alt-right, uh define alt-right to me. You define it. Go ahead.="

=Well, I'm (sayin') as [Senator

[ ]

No, define it for me. Come on let's go. De[fine it for me.]

[ ]

Senator] McCain defined them as the same groups. [that were behind the attack in Charlottesville]

[ ]

[Okay, what about the alt-left that came charging at] us.2 Excuse me. What about the alt-left that came charging at the, as you say, the alt-right? Do they have any () semblance of guilt?

2 POLITICO originally transcribed 101 as "came charging at us." After White House objections, they changed "us" to "em" in line with all other news outlets. We have listened to the ABC News, Associated Press-New York Times, C-
102 Rs: [[[ONGOING CLAMOR ]]]

103 Rx: [But sir- sir ( )]

104 R6: [This is [Senator McCain's statement]

105 R7: [Are you equivocating here?]

106 DT: What if- Let me ask you this. What about the fact that they came charging- that they came charging with clubs in their hands, swinging clubs. Do they have any {1.0} problem, <I think they do.>

107 Rs: [[[ONGOING CLAMOR ]]]

108 R6: [Sor[ry are you saying {sir }]]

109 Rx: [Mr. Trump ]

110 DT: [So, you know, as far as] I'm concerned, that was a horrible, horrible [ day ]

111 R3: [(But) you're not putting the [ ] on the same level as the Neo-Nazis and White supremacists.] Sir.

112 DT: [Wait a minute. I'm not finished. I'm not finished. Fake news.]

113 DT: That was a horrible day, [ ((IS CUT OFF BY CLAMOR--looks off to the side )] [ ]] [ ]] [ ]

114 Rs: [[[ONGOING CLAMOR ]]]

115 R3: You're saying- you're not putting these protestors on the same level as neo-Nazis and White supremacists

116 R4: [{Is the alt-left as bad as White supremacy?}

117 DT: I will tell you something. I watched those very closely, much more closely than you people watched it. And you have uh y- you had a group on one side that was bad, and you had a group on the other side that was also very violent. And nobody wants to say that. [But I'll say it right now.]

118 Rx: [you'll say (who's perpetrated)( )]

119 R3: That's [one ( )]

120 DT: [You had a group- You had a group on the other side that came charging in, without a permit, and they were very, very violent.]

121 Rs: [[[ONGOING CLAMOR ]]]

122 Rx: [Well how [do you ( )]

123 R1: [Are you saying the left is the same as the ( ) with White supremacy? Are you saying ( ) is

SPAN, CNN, FOX News, and NBC News audio recordings. In all recordings, Trump can be heard to utter a monosyllabic word that sounds like it begins with a vowel and ends in "s"
124 R4: [( )is behind this.

125 R3: [( ) all of this happened- all of this happened [because the ( )] 

126 Rx: [The ( ) started this.

127 DT: [Go ahead. ((pointing to R1))]

128 R1: Do you think that the- what you call the alt-left is the same as neo-Nazis?

129 DT: I uh those people- all of those people- Excuse me. I’ve condemned neo-Nazis. I’ve condemned many different groups. But not all of those people were ( ) neo-Nazis believe me. Not all of those people were White supremacists, by any stretch.

130 R1: (They) were White nationalists

131 DT: [Those people ( ) were also there because they wanted to protest the taking down of a statue Robert E. Lee. So]

132 Rx1: Should that statue be taken down?=

133 DT: =Excuse me. If you take a look at some of the groups, and you see- and you’d know it if you were honest reporters, which in many cases you’re not. But many of those people were there to protest the taking down of the statue of Robert E. Lee. So. This week it’s Robert E. Lee, I noticed that Stonewall Jackson’s coming down. I wonder, is it George Washington next week and is it Thomas Jefferson the week after. You know, you all- You really do have to ask yourself, where does it stop?

134 Rx1: Should they take it down?

135 Rs: [[[ ONGOING CLAMOR ])]

136 Rx2: [[[ ]][Jews will not replace us]]

137 DT: [But they were there to protest- ] Excuse me. You take a look, the night before they were there to protest the taking down of the statue of Robert E. Lee=Infrastructure question. Go ahead.

138 Rx3: Should statues of Robert E. Lee stay up?

139 DT: I would say that’s up to a local ( ) town, ( ) community, or the federal government depending on where it is located.

140 Rs: [[[ CLAMOR ])]

141 Rx3: [Are you against the Confederacy?]

142 DT: ((Points to a reporter on his right))

143 Rx: (How- How concerned are you) about race relations in America? And do you think things have gotten worse or better since you took office?

144 DT: I think they’ve gotten better or the same uh- Look, they’ve been frayed for a long time. And you can ask President Obama about that, because he’d make speeches about it. But, I believe that the fact that I brought in- it will be soon, millions of jobs, you see where companies are moving back into our
country. I think that’s going to have a tremendous positive impact on race relations. We have companies coming back into our country. We have two car companies that just announced. We have Foxconn, in Wisconsin, just announced. We have many companies, I say pouring back into the country. I think that’s going to have a huge, positive impact on race relations. You know why? It’s jobs. What people want now, they want jobs. They want great jobs with good pay. And when they have that, you watch how race relations will be. And I’ll tell you we’re spending a lot of money on the inner cities. We’re gonna fix- we’re fixing the inner cities. We’re doing far more than anybody’s done with respect to the inner cities. It’s a priority for me. [And it’s very important.

145 Rs: [((ONGOING CLAMOR ))]
146 Rx: [((wait a minute)]

147 R1: Mr. President, are you (putting ) Mr. President are you putting what you’re calling the alt-left and White supremacists on the same moral plane?

148 DT: ((looking at R1, arm extended with palm facing her)) I’m not putting anybody on a moral plane, what I’m saying is this. You had a group on one side and you had a group on the other, and they came at each other with clubs and it was vicious and it was horrible and it was a horrible thing to watch. But there is another side. There was a group on this side. You can call them the left, you’ve just called them the left, that came violently attacking the other group. So you can say what you want, but that’s the way it is.

149 Rs: [((ONGOING CLAMOR ))]
150 Rx: [Mr. President your words]

151 DT: ((DT looks left and points to a different reporter))

152 Rx: ( ) on both sides, sir. You said there was hatred, there was violence on both sides. Are- Are [you saying]( ) (I’m trying)
153 DT: [Well I do think there's blame. Yes, I think there's blame on both sides. [You look at-] You looks at= [ ]
154 Rx: [( )]

155 DT: =both sides, I think there's blame on both sides. And I have no doubt about it. And you don't have any doubt about it either.

156 R4: [(But own-) only the Nazis [(  )] took a [life]
157 DT: [And ] [And] [And ] [And if you reported it accurately, you would say.

158 Rs: [((ONGOING CLAMOR ))]
159 Rx: [But (they're) Nazis

160 R1: [Both sides][((pause))] [They killed a person. Heather Heyer died]
161 R3: [Neo-Nazis started this thing. They showed up at Charlo-

162 DT: [Excuse me.] [Excuse me. They didn't put them]selves down as Neo-Nazis. And you had some very bad people in that group, but you also had people () that were very fine people=On both sides. You had people in that group- [Excuse me. Excuse me.] I saw=
163 Rx: [ ] 164 DT: =the same ( ) pictures as you did.

165 Rx:  

166 DT: You had people in that group that were there to protest the taking down of, to them, a very, very important statue and the renaming of a park from Robert E. Lee to another name.

167 Rs: [[[ONGOING CLAMOR ]]]

168 Rs: [[[ ] White nationalist event?] ]

169 R3: [George Washington and Robert E. Lee are not] the same [because-]

170 DT: [Well no,] George Washington was a slave owner. ( ) Was George Washington a slave owner?

171 Rs: [[[ONGOING CLAMOR ]]]

172 Rx: [He was a slave owner.

173 DT: [So will George Washington now lose his status? Are we going to [take down- Excuse me.]]

174 Rx: [ ] symbols (of oppression)

175 DT: Are we going to take down- Are we going to take down statues [to George Wash-?]

176 Rx: [ ]


178 R3: I do love Thomas Jefferson.]

179 DT: [Okay, good. ] Are we going to take down the statue? because he was a major slave owner. Now, are we going to take down his statue?

180 Rs: [[[ONGOING CLAMOR ]]]

181 DT: So you know what, it’s fine. You’re changing history. You’re changing culture. And you had people, and I’m not talking about the neo-Nazis and the White nationalists, because they should be condemned totally. But you had many people in that group other than neo-Nazis and White nationalists, okay? And the press has treated them ( ) absolutely unfairly.

182 Rs: [[[ CLAMOR ]]]

183 DT: [Now, ( ) in the other group also, you had some fine people. But you also had troublemakers. And you see them come with the- with the ( ) black outfits and with the helmets, and with the baseball bats. You got- you have a lotta of bad- you had a lot of bad people in the other group [too.

184 Rx: [Who are the good people? Who are the good [people? [}
[Who was treated unfairly? Sir, I am sorry. I just didn’t understand what you were saying. You were saying the press has treated White nationalists unfairly?
[I just didn’t understand what you were saying.]
[No, no.]
There were people in that rally, and I looked the night before, if you look, there were people protesting very quietly the taking down of the statue of Robert E. Lee. I’m sure in that group there was some bad ones. The following day it looked like they had some rough, bad people. Neo-Nazis, uh, White nationalists, whatever you want to call ‘em. But you had a lot of people in that group that were there to innocently protest, and very legally protest, because you know, I don’t know if you know, they had a permit. The other group didn’t have a permit. So I only tell you this. There are two sides to a story. I thought what took place was a horrible moment for our country. A horrible moment. But there are two sides to the country. Does anybody have a final?
[Have you reached out]
I have an infrastructure question=
[Does anybody have]= You have an infrastructure
What makes you think you can get an infrastructure bill? You didn’t get healthcare. [You(  )]
I’ll tell you. We came very close with healthcare. Unfortunately, John McCain decided to vote against it at the last minute. You’ll have to ask John McCain why he did that. But we came very close to healthcare. We will end up getting healthcare. uh But we’ll get the infrastructure. And actually, infrastructure is something that I think we’ll have bipartisan support on. I actually think Democrats will go along with the infrastructure.
Mr. President, have you spoke to the family have you spoken to the family of the victim of the car attack?
[No, I’ll be reaching out. I’ll be reaching out.]
I was very I-I-I thought that the statement put out uh the mother’s statement I thought was a beautiful statement. I was tell you, I was it was something that I really appreciated. I thought it was terrific. And, really, under the- under the kind of stress that she’s under and the heartache that she’s under, I thought putting out that statement, to me was really something I won’t forget. [Thank you all very much. Thank you. Thank you.]
[When will you be reaching out?]
[[(Walks away from the lectern)]]