

Good afternoon, Mr. President, parents, professors and American University School of Communication's distinguished class of 2017. Thank you very much for having me, a humble layperson of the Strat-Comm. major, speak at such a prestigious event. For those of you who don't know me, yes, my name is XY, no my last name does not start with a Z; yes, I do have a belly button; and no, my name has absolutely nothing to do with my chromosome. I *am* an international student, and to answer your questions about how I speak English so good, 1. I went to an international American high school, and 2. Don't you mean, how I speak English so *well*?

I have two images to share with you today: The first image is one from a distant past, and the second image is a deeply personal one about my own past that I want to share with you. After sharing these images, I will tell you what ties them together.

The first image is one from many, many years ago. Picture this: there once was a cluster of very small countries that were constantly in conflict with each other for hundreds of years. Out one of these countries, an evil dictator rose out of the midst with a very radical ideology of fascist brutality. Indoctrinating his people with this belief that they were the superior people, this dictator and his loyal armies rampaged across the expanse of the other countries, conquering and pillaging, liquidating whole cities, and putting to death millions of people whom they thought were the inferior by blood. To this mass murderer, all of this land was his by birthright, as his people were by definition the perfect kind.

All of you may think you know exactly who this dictator is, but allow me to break that paradigm. This dictator actually won. In 221 B.C., Emperor Qin Shi Huang conquered all of the warring states around the country of Qin to create what we today refer to as China. Have you ever wondered why so many different languages exist in the country of China? In a way, it is because Emperor Qin Shi Huang did to China what Adolf Hitler failed to do with Europe. With impressive military tactics and a dangerous ideology, the Emperor's armies swept across the

nations in a bloodshed of Qin supremacy. And today, over two thousand years later, we do not remember him as a brutal dictator, but glorify him as the great “unifier of China.”

The second image is a very personal story that I am willing to share. In March of 2014, I had not talked to my father for three months. He and I had a very rough relationship for the longest time, and the distance of thousands of miles only served to uphold and strengthen our resentment towards each other. It was the night of the 7th, the Friday before Spring Break, when I get a message from my mom that Malaysian Airlines 370 had gone missing between Beijing and Kuala Lumpur, and that dad could be on that plane. All of a sudden, every single sliver of resentment I had for my father over the years dissipated. I was struck with a cold sweat, having come to the realization that I had built an image of distaste of my father that had grown in malice throughout the years; one that did not actually resemble who he was. When I soon found out that dad was actually on MH 371, flying the other direction, and that he was perfectly fine, I called him immediately when he landed, and told him that I was sorry, and that I loved him very much.

So, a murderous dictator and my foolishness— what do these two images have in common? They are both the products of excellent framing. The first one represents the framing done by the victors, the second one is the realization of the framing we do to ourselves. If there is anything that us journalists, broadcasters, videographers, and public relations specialists in this room can take away from our years here, it would be our expanded knowledge to spin a story in a certain direction; we as students of the School of Communication are trained masters of framing, and what this means is that we now have the wisdom of choice of not being blinded by the victors, or by ourselves. What this also means is that we have the responsibility of using this tool of framing for good and truth, and that we can no longer sit idly by at the face of injustice and wait for someone else to #kancelitkerwin. Framing is such a powerful tool, both for expansion and introspection. I encourage you to use it wisely.