

Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Ali Zaidi

JVN: Hi, curious people. I'm Jonathan Van Ness and welcome to Getting Curious. Woo. Happy Fourth of July, y'all. And I say that with love and happiness and a slight dashing of exasperation. But here's the thing y'all climate policy, climate change is the friend that never goes to sleep. They always are texting. They're always calling, they're always reminding us that they're here and they are trying to hang out. That is one of the reasons why climate policy is so important, especially in this election year, 2023 was one of the hottest summers on record in 2024 may even be hotter. We've covered on this podcast so much environmental matters, whether that was dam displacement or whether it was the plastic crisis with Marcus Erickson from Five Gyres. We've been covering climate change on this podcast for years. And one of the things that we want to know is: What is the government doing when it comes to environmental legislation? What's the Biden administration been doing over the last 3.5, 4 years to achieve a better environment for all of us?

So we got kind of a major uh get for this recording which is none other than the White House National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi. Ali Zaidi serves as assistant to the President and National Climate Advisor. In this role. He leads the White House Climate Policy Office which coordinates policy development. And President Biden's all of government approach to tackle this climate crisis to create good paying union jobs and advance environmental justice. Zaidi helped design and negotiate the President's historic climate and clean energy investment agenda, including the bipartisan infrastructure law and the Inflation Reduction Act. Ali Zaidi has also worked for the Obama administration and the State of New York. Ali emigrated from Pakistan and grew up outside Erie, PA. He received an AB from Harvard University and AJD from Georgetown University. And because Ali is an active domestic policy advisor for the administration, he's not able to speak on the election. Today, we're asking: What is the Biden administration done for the environment? And stick around to the end of the episode where we'll reflect on what we learned and how he answered this question.

JVN: Welcome to Getting curious, Ali, how are you?

ALI ZAIDI: Good to be with you.

JVN: You too. Now it's not every day that someone becomes like the White House National Climate Advisor. Like how did that journey happen? You're minding your own business and then like you finished school and then you were like, honey, I'm gonna help save the environment?

ALI ZAIDI: Yeah, totally. Well, the literal moment December 2020 I was standing is like kind of so corny, but it's real. I was standing on the National Mall and President elect Joe Biden called me and said, hey, you want to get after this climate challenge. But rewind uh to your point: what, what drove me to this? I, you know, I'd love to say, I, I like a tree hugger superhero kind of person. But what really brought me into this is the economic justice, economic opportunity part of all of climate action. You know, my, my folks and I moved here when I was five, going on six from Pakistan to Pennsylvania and we were able to climb up the ladder of the American dream. But as I've looked around over the last several decades, it's become harder and harder for folks to do that. And so when I thought about what I wanted to do with my life. I wanted to make that dream more accessible to more Americans and it turns out tackling climate change, means a whole bunch of clean energy and green jobs and it gives more folks a shot to move up the ladder. So that's, that's what brought me

to this. I think this is the biggest economic opportunity for America, for our middle class and frankly, for our ability to bring everybody around the world up to a better quality of living and quality of life.

JVN: What does that look like? So like, what's it typical day? You wake up, you get your hair together, which like as anyone doesn't because this hair, I just have to see you guys. I know that we're not talking about people's bodies anymore and I get that you're like a literal advisor to the fucking White House. We need to be serious, but your hair looks great. I love this side part. It looks and I love your beard. So you get yourself together and then what happens?

ALI ZAIDI: We dive in so we've got this really amazing team at the White House. That's the first of its kind. The president on day one, established a climate policy office. And what's really neat is what we did was look at the entire economy, buildings, transportation, agriculture, heavy industry. And we hired the most brilliant person we could find to take on climate change in that sector. So we all get together and figure out, hey, what are we going to drive down the field today? And the way we work is really by passing the ball. So we've got agency leaders, people like Secretary Deb Holland, Secretary Granholm doing massive things. Pass the ball to them, help them accomplish what they're trying to do in a big way. Pass the ball to our folks in the private sector and in civil society, NGOs who are stepping up in a big way in the face of the climate crisis, bring mayors and governors into tackling this crisis. So really day to day we're looking for um you know, to really belabor the analogy here, we're, we're both looking for sort of fast break plays uh ways we can put points on the board for the American people this week this month, create jobs, turn dirt on a big new infrastructure project. And then also how do we lay the foundation for that fundamental transformation that we need for a more sustainable and more just society, that stuff takes time, right? That's not a day's work, it's a decade's work. And so it's by giving president advice, it's by drafting sort of the play, it's by passing the ball, it's by getting more and more people moving quickly in the direction of big bold climate action.

JVN: So President Biden ran on one of the most progressive environmental policy platforms ever which we love. Can you talk to us about some of the major legislative accomplishments the administration's been able to achieve

ALI ZAIDI: Yeah. Look, I think there's the big bills and then there's the values that are strung through them and if you'll indulge me, I'll talk about both., the first is we passed the biggest infrastructure law in a generation. That means 50 billion bucks for resilience. \$50 billion for water infrastructure. People have been drinking from lead pipes and being poisoned by forever chemicals. Getting after those challenges in a meaningful way, \$15 billion to help modernize our grid. \$7.5 billion to build the first coast to coast.

JVN: So sorry, really quick. I'm so sorry just to be clear, this is the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that you're talking about, right? Or the bipartisan Infrastructure Act.

ALI ZAIDI: This is Bill. Yes, the bipartisan law, I'd like to say it's Bill and IRA is the couple that's going to save the planet. So Bill is the infrastructure law and then IRA is the Inflation Reduction Act and that is just unprecedented largest climate investment in the history of the world. And it's everything from planting trees to paying farmers to plant crops that will breathe in CO2 uh to tripling the pace of solar and wind deployment. So those are the two big iconic pieces of legislation. But let me speak to the values that are strung through this.

So number one, this pledge that the president made just as 40 which is basically, we made a map of the country and we looked at the places that have been systematically disenfranchised, disinvested in left behind. And, you know, it's black communities, it's brown communities, it's poor white communities, it's indigenous communities. And we said 40% of the benefit of this historic investment, we're gonna plow it right into those places. So that's one of the big values that runs through Bill and Ira and that's a really big deal. The second thing that I think is just so massive. We talk, if you're a climate person like me, we talk in, in just sort of um with such exuberance about all the crazy shit. We're building the solar and the wind and the steel that's going in the ground. Um And it's not just about the steel that's going in the ground. I think it's about the steel that's going in the spine of the American middle class, these bills, you don't get the full value of them unless you are paying a prevailing wage, unless you're teaming up with unions and, and implementing um project labor agreements, setting high standards so that we're not. And this goes to my, you know, attraction to this agenda. We're not just meeting the moment like greenhouse gas accountants, we're meeting the moment to lift a bunch of people out of poverty and into the middle class and position America to lead the world. So those are the two big bills, Bill and Ira. And you know, the president has done just incredible work getting Congress to pass those and now implementing them in a way that lives up to our values on justice and on jobs.

JVN: Can you talk about some of the specific ways that this, that, that justice 40 has been implemented so far? Is, is that like flint water? Like is there like water, like just talk to us about some of those specifics? Because I think that's really important that we spell that out to some of the listeners about what does that 40 look like in numbers? And what does that look like in projects?

ALI ZAIDI: Yeah. So, you know, we know now because **the science has caught** up to reality that the impacts of environmental degradation don't fall evenly across zip codes. Um It's literally hotter today in neighborhoods that were previously redlined because there's more pavement and fewer trees like degrees hotter. So when we implement the \$500 million of tree canopy money from the Inflation Reduction Act, we're planting those trees in those historically redlined communities and getting after not just the challenges posed by climate change as a generic matter, but in a targeted fashion, getting after it in the places that have borne the brunt. You think about ports, right, really critical to our economy, the lifeblood where commodities flow in and out, but there are a whole bunch of people in low income neighborhoods that have grown up on the fence line of ports. We have targeted funding. So we're not just helping electrify generically with big grant dollars. We are targeting those dollars in electrifying those parts so that kids can literally breathe easier. I mean, you've got communities where asthma rates are 2345 times the national average. How do we cut into that disparity? We do it by flipping ports from dirty and diesel to clean and electric. We're making those investments.

JVN: So one thing I think the administration has pointed out a lot and I have loved to see it is especially when it comes to the bipartisan or no, the Inflation Reduction Act, all the money that has gone to certain communities and then their local Republican representatives will be like we did XYZ and then the White House will be like, honey, you voted again, I'm paraphrasing here, but you voted against that. Like, so, you know, think like give credit to where credit is due. I would imagine that the Climate Policy office because you're making policy and then like policy does ultimately have to, I mean, there's like executive action but then there's like legislation and these are two bills that we're talking about. So does that

mean that your office has to like go to Capitol Hill and you're like interviewing like representatives, you're interviewing members of the house, you're interviewing like their chiefs of staff, you're, you're sitting with senators and being like, what's possible, what's not possible? Like, do you have to, do you, do you kind of craft these in the office? And you're like, this would be best, like, you know, like our best case scenario if we could get all these things. But then when you go on to the hill at like, is there certain political realities that come into play and you got to like, really put on like your negotiator hat or is that like not what or is that not what happens?

ALI ZAIDI: You know, the process is a process. You think, you know what the best ideas are, but you negotiate that with members of Congress. And by the way, in the noisy environment we live in. And I think this is a good thing the democratic process where you've also got key stakeholders weighing in, you've got the press polling on ideas, one direction and the other. And I think at the end of the day, you often come out with really brilliant solutions that can help us move forward. Think about, I think about the rural cooperative's, right? So I went up and talked to a bunch of members uh when we were constructing Bill and IRA about how we decarbonize electricity, right? Go from electricity, pumps, pollution in the sky to electricity that keeps our air clean and we had a lot of generic ideas for how you do that across the board, right? How do we set America up for success? One of the places of great feedback was people surfacing, the incredibly important role that rural co-operatives could play in making sure that that was a achievable for the most rural communities. And so under President Biden, we're actually making the biggest investment in rural co-operatives since LBJ, since we electrified America in rural areas in the first place. So, you know, I think that process is an important one. And it's a, it's a lowercase p political process. Um And I think that's a good thing, you know, people often Asche the political process is a bad one. I think it's really important for us to be responsive to the people we all serve. That's the bottom line. And I think, you know, there's a lot that's been made of, oh, President Biden's investment agenda is going to red states and blue states and everybody. Well, that's actually the point Joe Biden ran to deliver for everybody no matter where they, you know, grew up and, and, and the reality is, you know, climate change doesn't swerve because you live in a red state or a blue state. We're all in this soup together. We might as well all structure the solutions together and get the benefit from it.

JVN: Is someone getting it so that more people can have a more safe boat or is some people getting it where like the top 1% can stay in their yachts and then like everyone else is just going to stay on your fucking headboard. So I think it's important for us as like constituents and like voters to remember like whose policies do? What? So I, I know that, you know, in this time, you probably can't say anything about that, but maybe you can, I don't know, you can, but that's just how I'm feeling in my, in my gay body. So I wanted to say it.

ALI ZAIDI: So, look, we've had this debate with the Republicans that have taken over the house who have tried to pass time and again, legislation that rolls us back on efforts to help build the resilience and adaptation of low income and moderate income communities. And also help those communities reach into the economic opportunity that's presented by getting solar on your roof and being able to cut your energy bill. They tried to roll back uh this rebate program that helps folks retrofit their home from, you know, old clunky appliances that cost them a bunch of money to newer appliances that will help them cut their utility bills by 1000 bucks a year. And to me, that's like, look, we're all better off if we're wasting less energy and your notion that um that's absolutely achievable for everybody um is inconsistent with the

fact that for you know, 100 years we've had oil and gas subsidies for decades, we've had a tax policy that's fundamentally unfair. You've got people at the very top paying basically nothing, you know, corporations paying zero billionaires paying 8 9% and folks in the middle class paying twice, three times that. So if we didn't have all the structural inequality, if we didn't have all of this build up of bad policy decisions that had created the unlevel playing field, then maybe it would be make sense to say, hey, you know, everybody's sort of on your own. You, you, you know, you build the resilience into your home, you figure out how to cut your own cost, but we're in the shared enterprise of building a more just society. Some folks need the support uh to get going. And um and I think that's been, it's been a struggle to communicate that and to engage on that with some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle in, in the house. And perhaps the part that's most surprising to me is they do that in a way that undermines our economic strength in a really major fashion, right? Um If we create those markets and we allow more people to be able to afford these technologies, we're also underwriting an economic manufacturing boom in America. Um So it's like even if you just care about companies and business, then let's invest in this stuff because it reinforces our economic strength. It allows us to compete with other countries. Um No one benefits from uh people having to carry around bigger uh utility bills than they need to. Um And we should have, it shouldn't just be a house democratic priority to help uh folks shoulder that utility burden. It shouldn't just be a house democratic priority to create solar uh manufacturing jobs in the United States.

JVN: What I think is really strong about what you're saying here is that actually environmental policy can have economic advantage for countries, for communities. It's not this thing that makes it harder to start business or harder to achieve upward economic mobility. And it also doesn't have to be the thing where like, yes, billionaires in the top 1% should be, corporations should be paying their fair share. Um but it's not even necessarily for that, but for them, it's going to be, you know, a burden. Can you talk more about the ways that we've actually seen these environmental policies be a net positive for people, communities and corporations if there's any examples of that?

ALI ZAIDI: Yeah, so we when we invest in cleaning up water, um you and I would probably think about that in terms of people, right? Homes, families, kids. But when you actually survey manufacturing companies, one of the things they look for when they locate a factory is a place that has access to clean water. We talk about modernizing the grid, right? Because we want to deploy clean energy, we wanna move to a grid that doesn't contribute to pollution. I talked to Fortune 100 fortune 500 CEOs all the time who are looking for places that have put money in modernizing the grid because they want reliable power and they increasingly want clean power because they know that's the responsible thing to do. And when it comes to these rules of the road, these standards designed to protect us, you know, I don't know, a CEO who's responsible, who wants a less productive workforce because the community is incapable of taking on extreme heat, no heat and productivity. They're related to one another. I don't know, a CEO who is excited about having a factory in the floodplain in a community where the mayor denies climate change is happening, that there's sea level rise and there's increased hurricane risk. Nobody is excited about public leadership that denies economic and environmental realities. So this stuff not just protects everybody, it's not just good for everybody in terms of the downside risk. You can see business flying to the places that have strong and smart policy. Now, let me be clear, we can distinguish between good regulatory and standard setting policy and bad regulatory, standard setting policy. The president's done a whole heck of a lot to try to speed up the way government works to make

it more functional, to make sure it's delivering to make sure it's friendly to the proposition of investing in America. But that doesn't mean gutting our bedrock statutes and endangering the American people. And that's oftentimes the choice that's presented and that's not just a false choice. It's a reckless and dangerous choice.

JVN: You know what it reminds me of. I make this comparison a lot. Sometimes I'm really fucking hungry and sometimes when I'm really hungry, I get hangry because I'm just hungry. And it's like you're driving home and you're like, fuck it. I'm starving. I need to eat some food and you pass by Taco Bell and you're like, that's gonna feel so good right now. It's gonna make me feel good. I love my Taco Bell and this isn't like a slighted Taco Bell because like, I'm obsessed with you, obviously. But it's like if I went home and like made myself some salad, I like, you know, with some like gorgeous little protein in there, like, made it from home, I probably would feel better. But that's more nuanced and it takes way longer and that's like the anger and blame of these like black and white, no nuance. You know, the way that it's presented where it's like an all or nothing, some game with like gutting the statutes and gutting the regular. I just, I just noticed that it's like this like knee jerk reaction to like blame and cast blame and we don't really roll up our sleeves and do this difficult work and I thank you and this administration for doing that work. So wildfires we're progressing and we're doing, I swear so wildfires. It has been the hottest summer. Our last summer was the hottest summer on record. 2024 is on, you know, record to do the same. Um, we, we talked about this, this, uh, I think Jim Imhoff this like old or maybe I'm saying wrong but the senator who like brought that, like, you know, snowball to the Senate was like, if climate change is real, why it's snowing in March. And it's like, well, it's, you know, more unpredictable weather patterns and that's why it's snowing in March. Just fucking Jesus Christ. But when it comes to wildfires and how they are getting worse and more people are at risk of losing homes safety to wildfires. Can you talk to us about the administration's climate resilience efforts?

ALI ZAIDI: Yeah, a few big things there. Number one, we've got to strengthen our capacity to deal with the fire when it's actually unleashed. And that's why the president delivered a raise for the wildland firefighters. He's helped expand the ranks of the wildland firefighters hiring more uh invested in the infrastructure, the, you know, the tank equipment, that helps them, take on these fires with less risk to their own lives. So that's pillar number one, when the fires in your face, um you wanna make sure that you're standing with the folks who are actually helping us stay safe. But then it's all this other stuff that goes into trying to keep the fire from showing up in the first place. And if it does, making sure that we've done everything we can to avoid it burning as big and as, as damaging as it has in years past. So, one big thing we're doing millions of acres under this administration, we have gone and managed the forest in a different way to take some of the fuel out. So if there is a fire, it doesn't have as much fuel to burn aggressively and keep going. So that's an investment in our forest service in our Bureau of Land Management in local communities who are helping deliver healthier for us. The second big thing that we're doing is investing in building code upgrades, that sounds super boring. But we actually have fire resistant building codes so that when a fire hits a community center, It actually can protect the people who are sheltering there in place. So we're not only upgrading those building codes but investing in strengthening those places. And the third thing is all about the future. And that means investing in the data and the systems to predict better. And it also means investing in the young people who want to step up in a big way and help us manage this risk we've got the American Climate Corps that the President has launched. And one of the areas where the American Climate Corp is recruiting is young people who want to help us build resilience in the communities through forest

management, build resilience in the communities by upgrading community centers and buildings, help train up for those tech jobs of the future that will help us be better at predicting the risk. Um We need to do all of the things we can't just pick one. It's a big issue. It's a big risk. It's fundamentally unfair that we have a new generation of young people who think it's normal that the sky turns orange, who think it's normal that they have to breathe, smoke into their lungs. That's not normal. That's a big problem and we need to do something about it. And the cool thing is we've got a whole bunch of those young people stepping up to be part of that solution for the American climate Corp.

JVN: Dr Giles is this marine biologist. We're obsessed with her and we were getting to learn all about these like like like Northwest pilot whales or these like cutie fucking whales and they live around like Seattle and like the Pacific Northwest, right? And the reason that they are like dying and endangered as compared to like their other whale friends is these whales eat fish, but the other whales eat big mammals and these fish are stuck in the fucking dams in the up northwest. And so they can't swim down. And then I saw in California they're like getting rid of some dams. And then years ago, I'm getting curious um we did this episode about dam displacement and first I was like, damn displacement. Like, what does that even mean? Is that like a thing? And then I learned like, what a thing it is. And then I realized that I live next to a dam here in Austin and like dams like, you know, hydropower. It's like this whole thing. It's like, are they good? Are they bad? Who knows? But Doctor Giles just told me to tell someone in the administration if I ever get to talk to someone in the administration and I was too busy talking to Vice President Kamala Harris about like Planned Parenthood and HIV. So if we can do anything about getting rid of those dams to help these salmon get down to the river so that the pilot whales can eat the fishes because it's not actually the sound pollution because all the other whales that eat the mammals, they are fine with the same sound pollution. It's just that they don't have their food. And then the mom whales pass all the forever chemicals because like the fish, they do get, they, they're too skinny. And then when they have their babies, the babies are still born because they have all these forever chemicals. In them. So anything that you can do about these fucking dams in the Upper Northwest that are killing these cute whales? We'd really appreciate it. Ah - that what this one technology they did. They invented this technology where they can test whale poop to see if it's like healthy, pregnant, sick, whatever they like because like the whale poop floats on top of the ocean. So they take poop samples and that's how they can test the whales instead of having to take their blood.

ALI ZAIDI: When you look at the infrastructure law, it's got so many amazing things in it. One of them is actually the first concerted investment in culverts. These are like the tunnels that allow the fish to get through infrastructure. So we're actually building culverts where the dams can't be removed uh to help the fish pass through. And then of course, we are actually taking on in a meaningful way, dam removal in the northwest. But you know, there's a lot that's going on with the salmon and, and the sort of food for the for the whales moving up more and more north as a result of climate change, it has impacts both for the whales but also for the indigenous communities that rely on them for subsistence. So uh holler to, to doctor Giles who's, who's right, like right on. In terms of we need infrastructure investment, we need attention to this stuff. And again, it's not just like Oh, it's just about whales. No, no, no. This is about an entire region and its ecosystem and a way of and a and a national memory and a set of uh cultural practices. We've got to step up to the plate on this and recognize climate change is connected to that.

JVN: No, environmental policy is not anti-business. It's very pro business. We are literally seeing good stories all over the countries of helping communities achieve upward economic mobility sliding into home base. You mentioned young people earlier with the American climate Corp. So what do you say to young people that are passionate about climate action, getting involved, dealing with the setbacks or dealing with disappointments in anything? How, what do you say to young people that want to get involved or might be pissed?

ALI ZAIDI: Yeah. Well, the first thing I say to young people is it's totally fine to be to be angry, to feel a sense of uh loss or frustration. I met a young person from Sub Saharan Africa who talked about how the walk to the river where she got water for her family kept getting longer because the river kept moving further and further away. That's real loss, that's pain we should feel. But at a different environmental conference, I met a young kid from Ecuador who came up to me and said, oh, I'm really glad that you did what you did in the United States because now, I can push my leaders to pass something similar, something big, something that reaches that kind of ambition. So as much as there's the doom and despair, there's the hope, opportunity, possibilities, a piece of it. And one way we're seeing it manifest and folks can go on uh acc.gov, that's our climate core website. And if you actually, if you scroll through, it's, it's kind of amazing. There are literal jobs uh that people can sign up for and you just put in, you know, you live in Seattle, you put that in. it will search roles for you and then you just sort of scroll through and you can click in and apply and join the American Climate Corps. That's probably the most high engagement way to get in, spend a year uh building the solutions. But my big message to young people is you are powerful beyond what you understand. For decades, people have been trying to pass climate legislation. And for decades, there have been polluters who've been paying lobbyists to keep that from happening. The reason in 2022 we passed the Inflation reduction Act is because young people stepped up, they got involved, they had their voices heard, they had a president who had their back and they got the biggest climate law over the line. 300,000 jobs have been created in clean energy since the president took office. But that's just the beginning. We have a lot to be hopeful about. And I think the most hope I get is from the power of young people coming together, being impatient, being a little frustrated, being a little angry. Uh but being part of the process to build a better America and to give you a really good ally.

JVN: On your last question because that was really good. But just one more. What do you think that the Biden administration can accomplish more? What do you think is like to like on an inspiring thing? Like, what do you do you think there's like, are, are you allowed to talk about like a second if, if like, because, because if it with another four years, like what could he accomplish? What could this administration accomplish with even four more years in a potential Democrat House and Senate?

ALI ZAIDI: The president's been very clear about all that we need to do to finish the job. You know, we've got 100 and 85,000 charging stations that line our roads and highways, but we've got to build hundreds of thousands more with the electrical workers, with the young people training up to be members of the IBW this year, we're gonna add more capacity to our grid than we have in two decades. 96% of that will be clean. Oh, we've got to keep doing that every single year for the next decade to get the job done to deliver clean air. Uh to everybody. We've got 41 million acres, the president's conserved, but there's many more opportunities, whether it's the wetlands that are disappearing or the forests, the old growth forests that we need to fight to preserve. There's a lot more to do to finish that job. And if we do all of that, we will position America from having been under the previous administration, a

laggard on clean energy to being the leader, not just on the keys to the economic future of the world, but on this moral issue that will define our time. So there's a lot of work to do to finish the job. There are a lot of people who want us to take a U turn. I see that in the house Republican caucus every day, they're, they're voting to block us from setting standards to limit pollution from tail pipes at a time when you can go buy a hybrid or fully electric car that pumps no pollution in the sky. They don't want those standards. This is the moral equivalent of saying a couple decades ago, hey, we shouldn't have seatbelts because that's change. We shouldn't have a federal regulation requiring seatbelts because that's change. How can you be in public office and not stand up for the safety of our kids and generations to come. That's the big question I have and the answer uh I think is in finishing the job, the agenda that the president's laid out. We see the upside everywhere. We see the inspiration and we've just got to stay the course on doing that important work as a country.

JVN: Ali Zaidi. Thank you so much for coming and getting curious. We appreciate you so much of an incredible guest. Thank you so much for getting down with us and keep on doing your good work. We're cheering for you.

ALI ZAIDI: Thank you. This was a pleasure.

JVN: We just wrapped up episode with Advisor Zaidi. And for me, one thing that I was really trying to get to Ali Zaidi what I wanted to get to our listeners is what do we say to constituents who showed up for Biden in the first election and are unsure whether to now. And I think that there's so many people who are climate um who are really passionate about climate change. And I think that a lot of people feel angry and frustrated with some of the decisions the Biden administration has made. And one thing that I took away from this is, is that the Inflation Reduction Act and the bipartisan infrastructure bill are huge boons to environmental justice. And I don't think that the Biden administration really gets credit for that. And I also think that we as voters, maybe just the new cycle moves so fast and there is so much for us to be concerned with. I do think that some of the benefits of these bills um were, you know, maybe we didn't know as much. And so I'm really taking from that just the investment and even like the money that was invested in um dam removal or possible, I thought that was really important and really good. Um So I I thought it was really important the way that President Biden created the climate policy office. I like how he has enabled and empowered different secretaries in his cabinet to take on climate policy and climate justice. Fourth of July 2024. I'm sorry, it's hard. It is, it is what it is, it is hard. And I think that this is a really difficult time and you know, I think that in such a difficult time, it is reassuring to know that there is progress that is being made that there are good people in this administration who are fighting the good fight and they continue to do that. And so that's one thing that I took away is that I think that there is great people in this administration who are tackling really big hard jobs. And I also think that um you know, climate change, one thing that Ali said that I think is so important, this isn't a day's work, this is decades of work and this is going to take decades of understanding, working together compromise um and progress for us to get to where we need to go. I'm also curious about the economics of environmentalism. I mean, you know, hydro dams have been touted as something that had been really good for the environment and really good for, you know, creating energy. I was kind of reassured to hear um Ali not really bring that up and talk about it too much. But I am curious about hydropower where that's going and the economy of bills of these bills. And I believe that what Ali Zaidi said about, you know, these communities in Virginia, Ohio that are getting good investments in them. But I'd love to talk to some of the people from these communities

who have experienced these benefits and hear what they have to say about environmental justice and hear what they have to say about how their lives have been impacted by these bills. And I think that, you know, when one party is committed to not teaching uh history to denying that climate justice is even real. And I think the one thing about that is that, you know, when we talk about climate justice and then how it affects marginalized communities, I think a lot of people who are white, who are in those marginalized communities who face the effects and negative effects and consequences of environmental justice. They get lost and angry because of like even just bringing up black and brown, they're like, it's like, it's not always about race, it's really about class and it's not only about race and it's not only about class, it's about both the lived experience of black people, the lived experience of marginalized communities. It's like sometimes we're saying similar things, but we just get so triggered in hearing other people's experiences that we don't even let them talk long enough to get to where they're going. Um But I do think that's especially difficult now, when, you know, so many Republicans won't even admit that racism is real and that there are, there are long standing effects of racism that we are dealing with some of which is in the form of environmental justice where, you know, you can just hear the, the Margie Taylor Greens and the Lauren boars rolling their eyes and saying, you know, that's not true. Um You know, the environment isn't racist. Like why are you trying to make everything about race while some things do are about race? And there are straight lines of connections between that, but it's like, how do we get through this divide of this log jam of us being so polarized and working together? Um I think that's one of the biggest things that I'm curious about is like, what is our way forward no matter who wins in November, like what the fuck are we going to do? Um And I think that that's part of those fourth of July questions that we got to ask ourselves, what are we going to do? Um Because goddamn goddamn. Anyway, we love you. Thanks for listening to Getting Curious. Thanks for supporting our work and we will see you next time. Bye.

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