**8/21/24; Kamala's party**

**[HALF SECOND OF SILENCE]**

**[BILLBOARD]**

*<CLIP> Lil Jon: Yyyyeaaahhh, ladies and gentlemen we are here tonight to officially nominate Kamala Harris for President*

NOEL KING (HOST): Night two of the D-N-C - was more energetic. Lil Jon. Barack Obama. Bernie. Michelle Obama had jokes:

*<CLIP> Michelle Obama: “Who’s gonna tell him the job he’s currently seeking might just be one of those Black jobs?*

SCORING IN <Lady Shark Cop II (Walter Hill, 1988)>

NOEL: Black women are the backbone of the Democratic Party - goes an old saying. This week they’re out in force in Chicago, as Delegates. They’re young and excited.

*MO JENKINS (DELEGATE FROM TEXAS): It gives me goosebumps.*

NOEL: They’re fired up.

*HALA AYALA (DELEGATE FROM VIRGINIA): I'm going to tell the non-”PC” statement because that's who I am****.***

NOEL: They’ve read Project 2025

*HALA: Have you ever read ‘Fahrenheit 451’? I was like, what am I reading?*

NOEL: They know Donald Trump is a strong adversary.

*MO: A lot of these black men, especially the young black men who really, really like him that much, they're confused about where the policy came from.*

NOEL: They’re coming up on Today, Explained.

*<CLIP> Lil Jon: VIP Harriiisss. Governor Walz. VP Harris. Governor Walz.*

TODAY EXPLAINED: AT THE DNC ALL WEEK LONG. IN YOUR FEEDS EVERY WEEKDAY.

[THEME]

*<CLIP> DNC 2024*

*DJ Cassidy: Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is DJ Cassidy and I’d like to welcome you all to–*

*PATRICK BOYD: TODAY EXPLAAAAAINED!*

*DJ Cassidy: now we’re going to pass the mic!*

NOEL: On Monday, I went to downtown Chicago - not far from the D-N-C venue - to meet three Black women who are delegates this year. Juliana Stratton…

JULIANA STRATTON (LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS AND DELEGATE): I serve as the 48th lieutenant governor of the great state of Illinois. And I am 58 years old.

NOEL: One year younger than.

JULIANA: Madam Vice President Kamala Harris. That's right.

NOEL: Hala Ayala…

HALA: Former elected to the Virginia State General Assembly. I am 51 years lived… or numerically mature or distinguished. Depending where you <NOEL: I like them all.> in life.

NOEL: And Mo Jenkins

MO: I am the first black trans woman to represent the Texas Stonewall Democrats. I'm also a precinct chair in Harris County, seat 18, and I am 25 years old.

JULIANA: Mmm, baby.

ALL: <laughs>

NOEL: These women are going to be casting votes for Harris at the D-N-C, and I wanted to know how that feels. The Lieutenant Governor got us started.

JULIANA: Well, what I would say is that, it is a historic convention. We know that with Vice President Kamala Harris at the top of the ticket, along with her running mate, Tim Walz, we have the first, black woman to be at the top of the ticket. We have the first South Asian woman. And when elected, which will happen, she will be the first woman president of the United States. But as historic as it is, I keep coming back to the fact that it's not just about the history, although that is just so very special. It is the fact that Vice President Harris is the most qualified. She is the one with the character and the integrity. She is the one with the experience, and she is the one to not only lead our country forward, but she is the one who can beat Donald Trump. And that is what's going to protect our democracy. So I am just thrilled to be right here in the home state, my state of Illinois, welcoming all of these people.

HALA: Just hearing her words just moved me to tears. Because you feel not only the urgency, but you feel the impact of this moment. Right when I was running for lieutenant governor in my state, you know, being a black Latina woman and then being, my mother, being Lebanese and Irish, I have that diversity. And I've always was met with that. You're not black enough, you're not this enough. You're not enough. Well, damn it, we're enough. Excuse me for saying that out loud. But the thing is, I think our vice president is bringing so much to the forefront. She's talking about colourism, the thing that Donald Trump has weaponized across the United States. To make you feel bad about who you are. We should never feel that way.

NOEL: Let me ask you a question.

HALA: Ma’am.

NOEL: You're addressing something that really exploded just a couple of weeks ago when Donald Trump, doing an interview at the National Association of Black Journalists…   
  
HALA: Mhmm.

NOEL: …said that Kamala Harris is not black. I’m hearing you say I’ve had that experience and I’m wondering what went through your head at that moment?

HALA: It just makes you feel bad about yourself. But the narrative that Kamala does for me as a woman who has that diversity, that cultural nuance, if you will, and I identify as a black Latina**,** I'm just like, it's not your dang business. You can't choose for me. We choose. And I think what that does is help build that strength. And little girls watching across these United States that are having these experiences that people bully you. And that's what Donald Trump is doing on that stage. He was bullying you. And that is not acceptable. So we choose joy.

NOEL: Mo, what is casting that vote going to mean for you?

MO: It gives me goosebumps. but it also gives me a sense of pride of knowing that I'm putting our country back on track…

HALA & JULIANA: Hmm

MO: …to do the things that need to be done. But also, VP Harris just excites me anyways, I love her so much. Because she is everything that black women have always been told that we cannot be. You can't be smart, you can't be stylish, you can't be assertive because you know what you're talking about. You know you can't be intelligent and articulate yourself well. But but no, like we can be all the things that we want to be. You don't get to put us in a box. And so that is what is so exciting for me. And I just I'm excited to just go through this convention and I'm excited to see her.

JULIANA: It's like she takes up space for all of us. She is taking up space.   
  
MO: Mhm.

JULIANA: She is the one to lead us forward. And I love the words that you used, Mo, about just like this honor to be a delegate and to think about– It's not just about what happens this year. We're making decisions that are going to impact generations to come.   
  
MO: Right.

JULIANA: And, it's an awesome responsibility. Don't you both think?

MO: I think about it, you know, being Gen Z, and I'm watching like my nieces and nephews grow up and I'm like, you don't even realize what's happening around you. And I, I tell my nieces all the time, like, you don't realize this, but you're about to have your first woman president. You are going to grow up knowing that.

JULIANA: <Laughing> yes!

NOEL: But this is what's amazing, says the 25. Right?

JULIANA & HALA: Yes!

MO: <laughing>

NOEL: I mean, as people who are older than 25, it is amazing to see a 25 year old looking at kids and saying, the world that I grew up in, even as is a member of Gen Z, you won't recognize it when you're my age.

JULIANA: That’s right.

NOEL: This brings up something interesting and I will tell you, I've heard a line of thinking that says she should not focus on the historic nature of her candidacy. She should not focus on race. She should not focus on being a woman. She should focus on issues. Because talking about race, talking about being a woman, it draws attention to a thing that some of the electorate is still not comfortable with.

JULIANA: Well, yeah, sexism and misogyny and racism and all of those other things still exist.

HALA: Misogynoir! You know? yea!

JULIANA: It still exists.I mean, she's talking about issues. She released her economic plan. She's going to continue to lay out her plan this week, of course, about where the direction that our country is going and where our party is going from here. But what I would say is we can't deny the history and that. It is one of the things that has motivated so many people.

NOEL: Mo, I'm curious what you think. So, you are a child of the Obama era. You're somebody who has seen a world that other people at this table couldn't have imagined. In the same way that you're seeing a world that your little nieces and nephews can’t imagine. What do you think about the focus on race? I've heard this from young people in particular. It's just not that important.it's a secondary issue. It's not a main issue.

MO: Yeah, I would say most of those young folks probably aren't in Texas…

NOEL: Ha!

JULIANA: <laughs>

MO: where…

HALA: That part!

JULIANA: ding, ding ding.

MO: We're in a southern state where our rights are continuously being stripped away. And for me, being a Black woman in Texas, race is extremely important because it comes into everything that is at play. Every piece of legislation. Being a woman comes into play at every point. I mean, Texas has one of the most restrictive…

HALA: mhm.

MO: …abortion laws in the country. We had a trigger law before anybody even thought about trigger laws, right? So one VP Harris– just being a Black woman in general is going to get brought up…

JULIANA: yea.

MO: …right? They bring it up. They bring it up the grocery store, they bring it up at, you know, in line for a coffee. They're always going to bring it up. So I think yeah she can lead the narrative in the way that she wants it to go, right? But it also helps all of us who are fighting those same issues day to day, right? You know, I walk through the Capitol, I'm, am in my second session in the Capitol. It always gets brought up. Oh, you got that job because you're Black.

HALA: Hm!

MO: Oh, you got that job because you're a Black woman. And like, no, I'm qualified. I know what I'm talking about. I'm an expert in this policy. Same thing with VP Harris. She is an expert in what she's doing.

NOEL: I think that's where the pushback comes from. I think it is the sense that– you, the delegates, know that she's qualified, but you also know that this is a line of attack, right? And Hala, I wonder if you see any common sense in don't talk about it so much.

HALA: We've we've carried the water. We've done the work. This is our time. Stop trying to bully us and tell us how we should think. That is not appropriate. Donald Trump has weaponized every attribute of anyone he comes in contact with. Go get a life, sir. <laughs>

NOEL: One thing that he got a lot of credit for this year, in particular at the RNC, and I wanted to ask you about it because we’re at the DNC. Was, you walked away from the RNC knowing who Donald Trump was there to appeal to, and seeing him appeal to a different kind of potential Republican voter than the Republican Party traditionally appeals to. So that convention, that RNC, it was not the convention of the country club. It was not the convention of the Chamber of Commerce.

HALA: It was a hot mess.

NOEL: It was the convention of Kid Rock and Hulk Hogan. And when we spoke to analysts afterward, they said, there's something kind of interesting about this, because what he's doing is he's reaching out to people who may not have voted before. He's reaching out to swaths of America that typically the Republicans haven't paid very much attention to, and possibly even the Democrats have not paid enough attention to. And that's why they're there. What do you want to see happen at this convention? What future do you want the Democrats to telegraph for the American people?

JULIANA: Well, let me first just say the exact opposite of what was portrayed at that. RNC is the future that I want…

HALA: yea ma’am.

JULIANA: the Democrats to telegraph for the future. When I think about my four daughters and your nieces, that you talked about Mo and others~~,~~. I'm thinking about a future where there is an opportunity for everyone. I'm thinking about, them being able to have agency over their own bodies. I'm thinking about them being able to make decisions, to live…

HALA: Yes.

JULIANA: A life that is true to themselves, as you just said,   
  
HALA: Authentically us.

JULIANA: exactly.

HALA: absolutely.

JULIANA: And showing up into spaces where they can be themselves. I'm thinking about our stories being told and not being erased. But I'm also thinking about a burgeoning economy. I'm thinking about education, access, health care, access of access to affordable, quality childcare. I'm thinking about small businesses being able to start. I'm thinking about the George Floyd Policing Act being passed in Congress. So not just getting Vice President Kamala Harris elected, but flipping the House. So that's the world that I want.

NOEL: I hear what you're saying, and I hear a 49 year old white man in Michigan who's a toss up, but who has voted Democrat in the past. Does this vision that you just laid out, does that include him? Because Donald Trump is going for that man. Does that make sense to a white man in Michigan who can't decide which party is his party?

JULIANA: Well, what does make sense for the white man in Michigan who's 49 years old and trying to figure it out, one issue for sure is thinking about workers rights and making sure that we stand with organized labor. Somebody in Michigan who's a member of a union who knows that Donald Trump wants to take away union rights and workers rights.And so there are a number of things that we're going to have to lay out when we talk about reducing gas prices and food prices and all of those other things. Those are things that everyday Americans are going to want to know. How do we expand the middle class and move forward for everyone, rather than just thinking about those corporate interests? I don't think the 49 year old white man in Michigan is just interested in corporate advancement.

SCORING IN <A Roaring Fire and a Chicken Skin Rug (breakbeat version) - BMC>

NOEL: Coming up, we’re going to talk about two of the trickiest issues for the Democratic party this year: Black men who’ve turned to Donald Trump, and Gaza.

**[BREAK]**

**[BUMPER]**

NOEL: I was out at the protests in Union Park today. A lot of young people, deeply frustrated by what they view as the Democratic Party's loyalty to Israel. Now, that includes President Biden. That also includes, I heard from them again and again, Vice President Harris. This week, what they are asking for - and in fact, you know, in some ways, demanding - is a statement that says the U.S. will stop arming Israel, a statement that says the U.S. will change its relationship with Israel. Hala, This is very tricky for Vice President Harris. Hala, Please…

HALA: Noel, I am not qualified in that regard to speak for Vice President Harris. But what I will say, she called for a cease fire. She was public about that. And she says, I hear you. We've met, we've communicated, we've connected, and I hear you and I see you. I took that authentically because that's who she is, and I took that as there's more work to be done. There's more conversations to be had. You have a candidate who will work to make a peaceful solution, she is capable. She is qualified. what I would say to those activists, you're heard, you're seen. I understand the pain you're feeling. And so I trust Kamala, and I put this in her hands, and I look forward to seeing her solution.

NOEL: Mo, I want to turn this over to you because you're 25, which means you spend time on the TikTok, on the Instagram.   
  
MO: <laughs> yes. <laughs>  
  
HALA: The TikTok <laughs>

NOEL: So there is a dynamic there – as an elderly millennial, I'm allowed – there is a dynamic that I've seen emerge in the past couple of weeks on social media. It is… Palestinian activists, versus people who they thought they were in community with. And these tend to be young Black people who took up the Palestinian cause, but then saw Kamala Harris as the nominee and said, hang on, hang on. This is really important. We got something here. There's a there's a real fissure growing here.  
  
MO: yea.

NOEL: And I don't think anybody really knows what it means for the vote at the end of the day.

MO: mhm.

NOEL: But I'm curious, this movement, this end the war in Gaza movement, it is led by people your age.

MO: Yes…

NOEL: How much of a threat does this pose to the vice president as she embarks on this run?

MO: I think it's something that, you know, I would implore her to seriously consider. But in the same vein, I'm also what about Sudan? What about Congo? What about Haiti? What about these other predominantly African nations, Black nations within our diaspora that are also going through genocides, that are also going through exploitation, right. Texas State Democratic Party was the first state party to call for a ceasefire, and that was led by young people. Those were led by Young Dems that I'm in community with. I'm still fighting to make sure that we can end an act of genocide. I understand what that means – at the same time. Our house is burning too. So I got two cups of water. I'ma give you one and I'm a take one for myself. I'm trying to do both at the same time. I've seen that fissure and I've told everyone. we have to stick together.   
  
HALA: mhm.

MO: You have two opponents in this, right? You have one opponent that you can talk to and get on your side. The other one you're gonna have to beat to try to get on your side. Right? So do I want to fight you or do I want to talk to you?

NOEL: What's your response to, ‘You're walking away from us. You you started this with us. We said the Democrats don't do it right. We don't like the war in Gaza. We want it to end. And now you got your candidate and you're leaving us out here in the cold?

MO: My response to them is, I'm not leaving you in the cold. I'm not. I left you with a blanket. I'm on my way to go get the wood for the fire. But I can't make that happen. If I stay here with you in in the freezing cold, I don't move. There's an opportunity to move. There's an opportunity to do something. Let me take a risk really quickly. Let me see if it pays off. And if it pays off, it benefits all of us. It fix a lot of our problems. Right now, we're in a nice little blizzard, right? Nice little, you know, snapshot in Texas of a cold. But we're going to end up in the Arctic if I don't do the work necessary to make sure that Donald Trump does not become president, I have to be serious. Republicans – Nikki Haley went over and she was signing bombs. Like, I want you to understand that I'm not leaving you – Im coming back, but I have to do the work necessary to make sure that we have the fuel for the fire.

NOEL: Lieutenant Governor – Juliana – I understand that we're being told we're short on time, so I'm going to ask everyone a question to wrap us out. Which is you clearly want Vice President Harris to win this presidency. Give me your best possible thinking on this. What does she need to do in the general election?

JULIANA: I want to hear her plans for our economy. How we will continue to make progress. How we will continue to meet the needs of everyday Americans. How we will make sure that we protect access to our individual liberties, including reproductive rights and reproductive freedoms, as well as our civil rights, which have continued to be under attack.   
  
HALA: Absolutely.

JULIANA: But I just want to emphasize that it's also what we have to do. And I think that's what's so powerful about this moment. She is the candidate at the top of the ticket alongside of Governor Tim Walz. But this is about our democracy, and the democracy is us. We are it. We are the ones who are going to educate voters. We're the ones knocking on doors. We're the ones making phone calls. And to say Kamala for the people is about Kamala Harris being the sort of right at the center of our rallying cry, that this is when we need to see this democracy that we want to protect so much.

NOEL: I want to follow on that really quickly, because I listened to you talk, and I absolutely understand why the the Democratic Party has always said black women are the backbone. Black men this year showing increased interest in Donald Trump. I see it in my own neighborhood. I see it in my own friend group. What does she need to do to win those men back?

JULIANA: First of all, again with credible messengers as well. She has to be able to lay out the case about what that contrast is going to be. When 44,000 black women got on a call within 24 hours, we saw the black men get on a call the next day, and now they're activated. And we need to continue to see that.

NOEL: Hala, let me toss that over to you.

HALA: Hear, hear! Like, I think the Lieutenant Governor here outlined this perfectly, like I was on the call. And it kept growing. And I've been on this call for four years and we have been talking about this very issue, but I think, like.

NOEL: You've been talking about this.

HALA: Well, the the separate. Yeah, there's been a separation. We've seen it, like we can't deny that. And I think it's going to take some work. And she's had you know, this is a truncated presidency, you know, campaign. But she's such a great candidate. And I wake up every morning with a smile on my face. And I can't wait to vote for her as a delegate. And as, you know, an individual voter in this upcoming election.

NOEL: And Mo, because young people do tend to shoot very straight. Is it is it possible that some of these men can't be brought around, that it's time to just acknowledge there is something about Donald Trump that appeals to some percentage of black men, and the Democrats should accept it and move on. What do you think about this?

MO: You know, and I shoot straight with them when I, when I block walks, I'm a precinct chair in, in the Harris County. And they'll tell me, “Well I'm voting for Trump.” And I go, “why?” “Well, because he put stimulus check in my hand.” “No he didn't.” I was like if you remember, your checks was supposed to come out, you know, early summer, but then they got delayed because he wanted his name on it. So you think he gave you that check? He didn’t. But I always tell them, you know, at the end of the day, I want you to vote, but I want you to have the right information when you go vote. VP Harris is already giving us the things that we need to go forward and to be the foot soldiers, to make sure that we accomplish all the things. And as a precinct chair, I have my marching orders. I know what I need to do to go mobilize people in my district, as well as mobilize all the people around me.

NOEL: All right. That is all the time we have. Thank you so much for being with us here today. We really appreciate it.

JULIANA: Thank you. Noel.

MO: Thank you.

HALA: Thank you.

SCORING IN <PAY NO ATTENTION TO THIS POSTER OF RITA HAYWORTH>

NOEL: Illinois Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton and delegates from Virginia and Texas respectively, Hala Ayala and Mo Jenkins. Tomorrow - immigration may be the Harris campaign’s BIGGEST weakness. In Chicago, the problem is right out in the open. We’re gonna hit the streets and see how an influx of migrants has people angry and on edge in one of the city’s poorest areas.

*<CLIP> Caddy Bender, Chicago resident: They come from a country where they was working in a field, getting nothing but $0.02 a day for picking orange and tomatoes. And now they did. No city, no city out of 33rd, a city, then no city to take them, but Chicago. And that's the mayor, the government and and our president and the mayor. They came together to make sure that they had a place to stay. But the one who stayed here ain't got no where to stay. they living on the street, but they can't get no service. They can't even get food stamps.*

NOEL: We’ll be back with that tomorrow. Today’s show was produced by Hady Mawajdeh, edited by Miranda Kennedy, fact checked by Laura Bullard and engineered by Patrick Boyd and Andrea Kristinsdottir. Thanks to Amina al-Sadi back in Washington. I'm Noel King in Chicago. It's Today Explained.   
 **[10 SECONDS OF SILENCE]**