







Asking the questions was McGahn's friend William J. Hughes Jr., son of the Democratic former congressman and ambassador for whom the Hughes Center is named.

"It's timely that you're here. Couldn't come at a better time," Hughes started by saying. "You have some on one side saying actions were necessary — almost required — and on the other side saying actions aren't justified — it was rash and an institution is in jeopardy. I ask you about ... Harry and Meghan?"

"That's a tough one," McGahn said, playing along. "Not as tough as where I thought you were going. I heard she called the queen and said she thought it was a perfect call."

It was the first of many jokes between the two, and got the biggest laugh of the night.

"I enjoy liberty. I don't like the government," McGahn said when asked why he became a Republican after growing up in a Democratic family.

McGahn'

Stockton students Michael Jedlowski, of Brick Township; and Anthony Farfalla, of Toms River, are members of the student Republican group on campus. They said they wished McGahn could have talked about impeachment but enjoyed hearing about his work in general as White House counsel.

**South Jersey native McGahn named 72 times in Mueller report**

There were no protesters, although the school was ready with signs instructing them to stay outside the Performing Arts Center.

McGahn got into political work through practicing law at Squire Patton Boggs in Washington, D.C., he said, where his mentor was Ben Ginsberg, an expert in election law.

As White House counsel, McGahn said his job was to be the institutional conscience in advising the president about what he can and cannot do legally.

He also helped staff with their legal obligations, wrote executive orders, oversaw contracts and created lists of potential new federal and Supreme Court judges, he said.

One day he went from overseeing a contract for the annual Easter egg roll at the White House to handling an international issue in the Situation Room.

“You go from worrying about eggs to the most sensitive national security issues in the blink of the eye,” McGahn said.

As for his influence on federal judge appointments, Hughes called McGahn “the architect of the changing face of the federal judiciary,” saying he oversaw the appointment of more than 107 federal judges, raising the percentage of conservative judges to 51% from about 40%.

“Not to mention two very significant appointments to the Supreme Court, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh,” Hughes said.

“The president makes appointments, I was fortunate he put a tremendous amount of trust in me,” McGahn said. “What the president was looking for was folks who wanted to read the law as it was passed — not as they wanted.”

McGahn is a graduate of Holy Spirit High School in Absecon, and his mother, Noreen, a former school nurse in Brigantine, still lives in Brigantine.

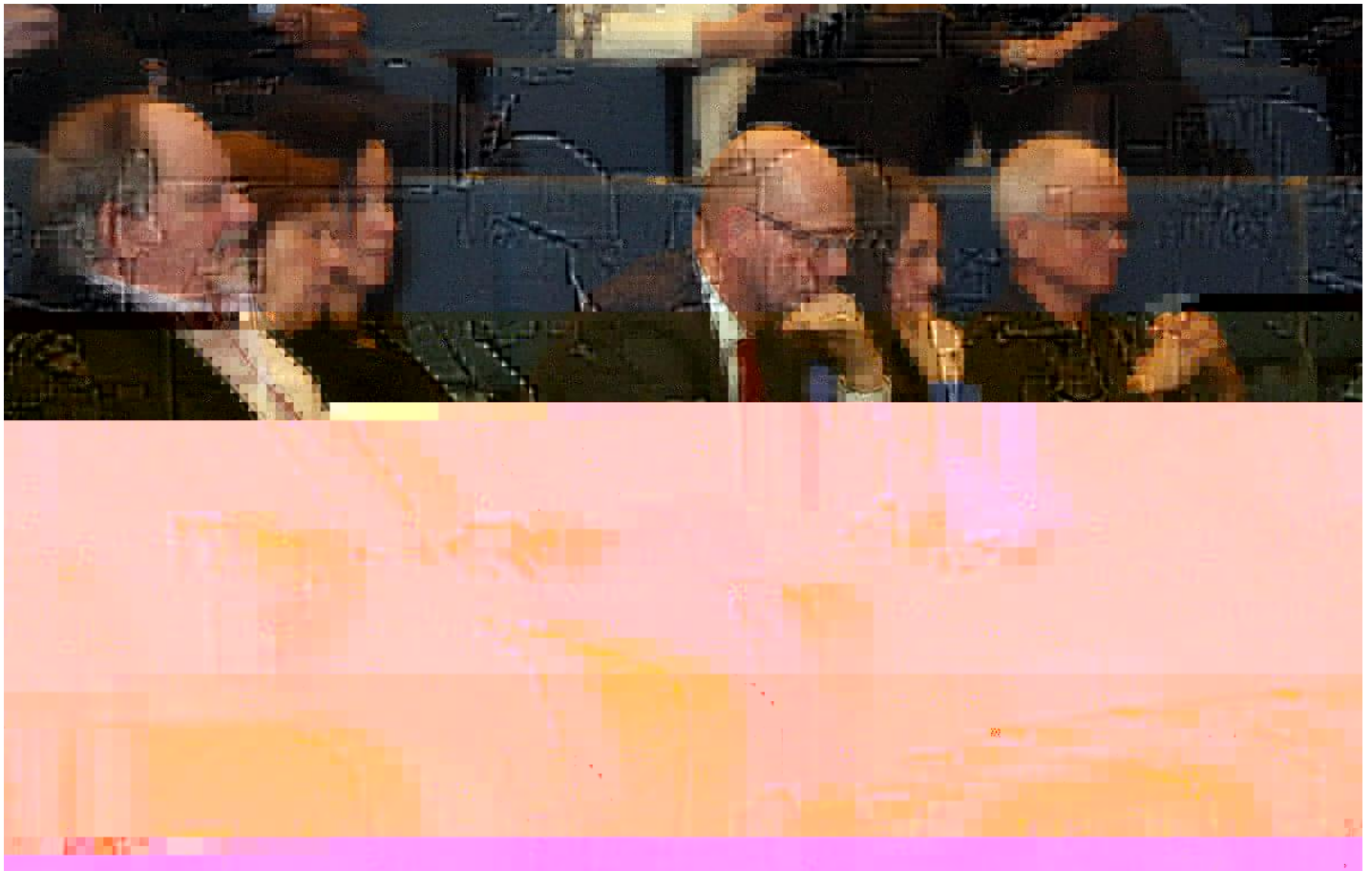
He has also worked as chief counsel for the National Republican Congressional Committee and served on the Federal Election Commission.



Don McGahn, left, former White House counsel and Brigantine resident, speaks with Bill Hughes, Jr., during a “Conversation with Don McGahn”, at Stockton University, in Galloway, Thursday Jan. 23, 2020. (VERNON OGRODNEK / For The Press)

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Audience listens to Don McGahn, former White House counsel and Brigantine resident, speaking with Bill Hughes, Jr., during a "Conversation with Don McGahn", at Stockton University, in Galloway, Thursday Jan. 23, 2020. (VERNON OGRODNEK /For The Press)

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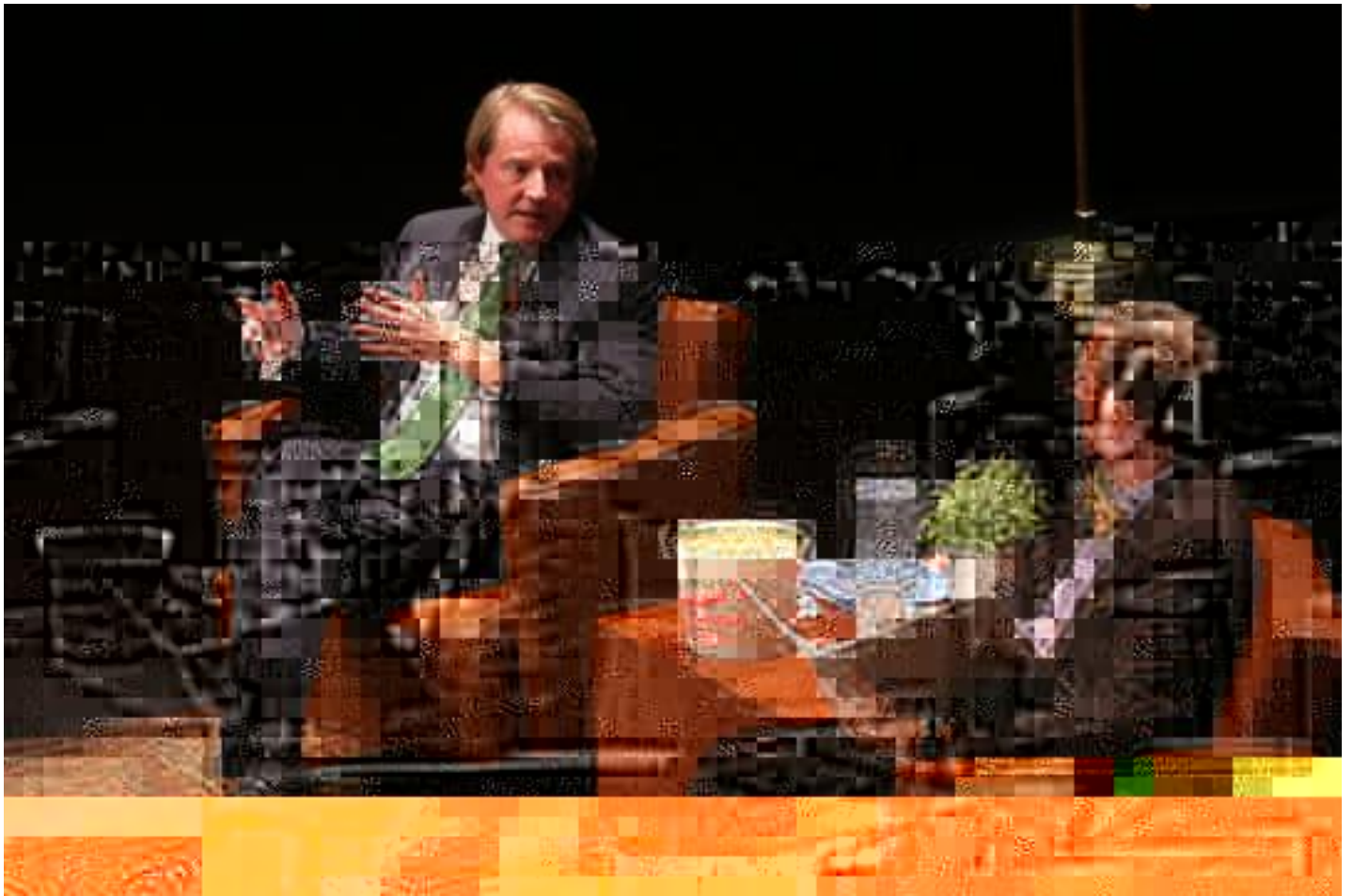


Former White House Counsel Don McGahn talks about his time in the Trump administration and his family's history with the president Thursday at Stockton University.

VERNON OGRODNEK /For The Press

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Don McGahn, left, former White House counsel and Brigantine resident, speaks with Bill Hughes, Jr., Jne



Don McGahn, left, former White House counsel and Brigantine resident, speaks with Bill Hughes, Jr., during a “Conversation with Don McGahn”, at Stockton University, in Galloway, Thursday Jan. 23, 2020. (VERNON OGRODNEK / For The Press)

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Don McGahn, left, former White House counsel and Brigantine resident, speaks with Bill Hughes, Jr., during a "Conversation with Don McGahn", at Stockton University, in Galloway, Thursday Jan. 23, 2020. (VERNON OGRODNEK / For The Press)

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Don McGahn, left, former White House counsel and Brigantine resident, speaks with Bill Hughes, Jr., during a “Conversation with Don McGahn”, at Stockton University, in Galloway, Thursday Jan. 23, 2020. (VERNON OGRODNEK / For The Press)

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Don McGahn, left, former White House counsel and Brigantine resident, speaks with Bill Hughes, Jr., during a “Conversation with Don McGahn”, at Stockton University, in Galloway, Thursday Jan. 23, 2020. (VERNON OGRODNEK / For The Press)

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Don McGahn, left, former White House counsel and Brigantine resident, speaks with Bill Hughes, Jr., during a "Conversation with Don McGahn", at Stockton University, in Galloway, Thursday Jan. 23, 2020. (VERNON OGRODNEK / For The Press)

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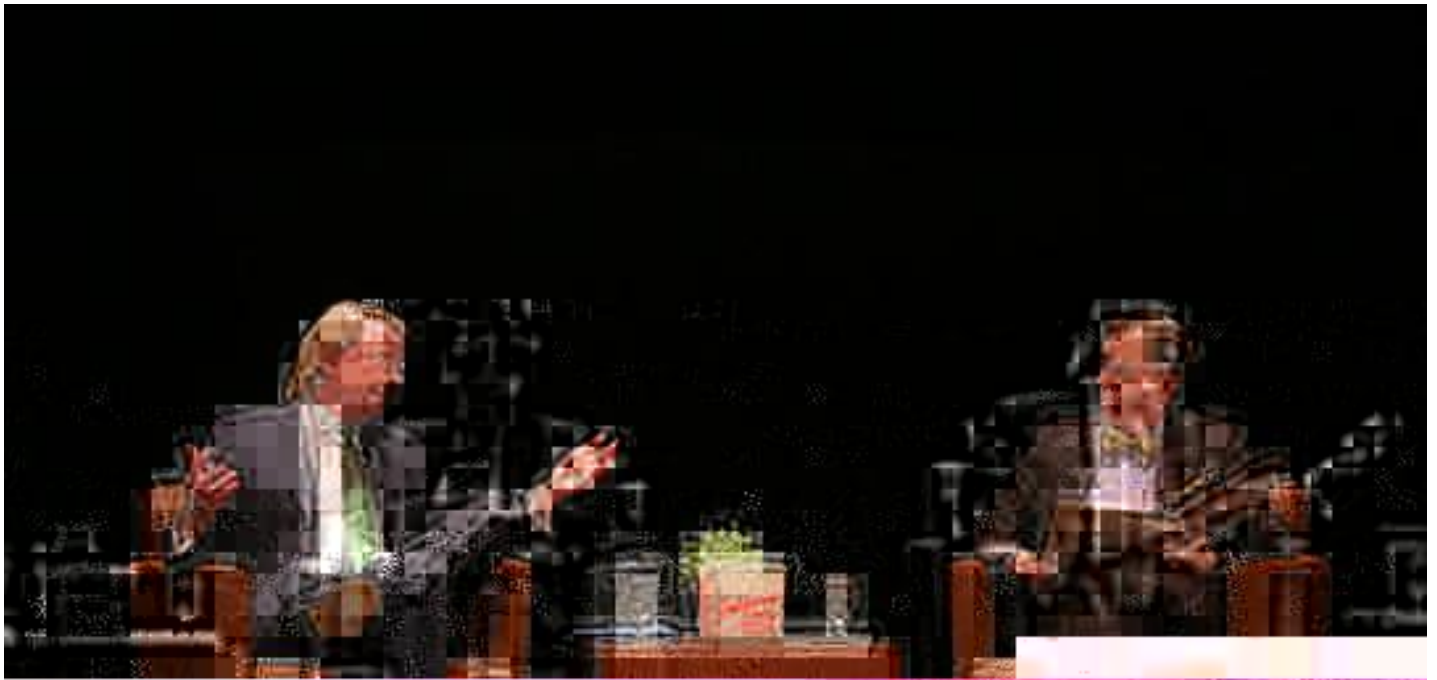


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Don McGahn, left, former White House counsel and Brigantine resident, speaks with Bill Hughes, Jr., J edehJ



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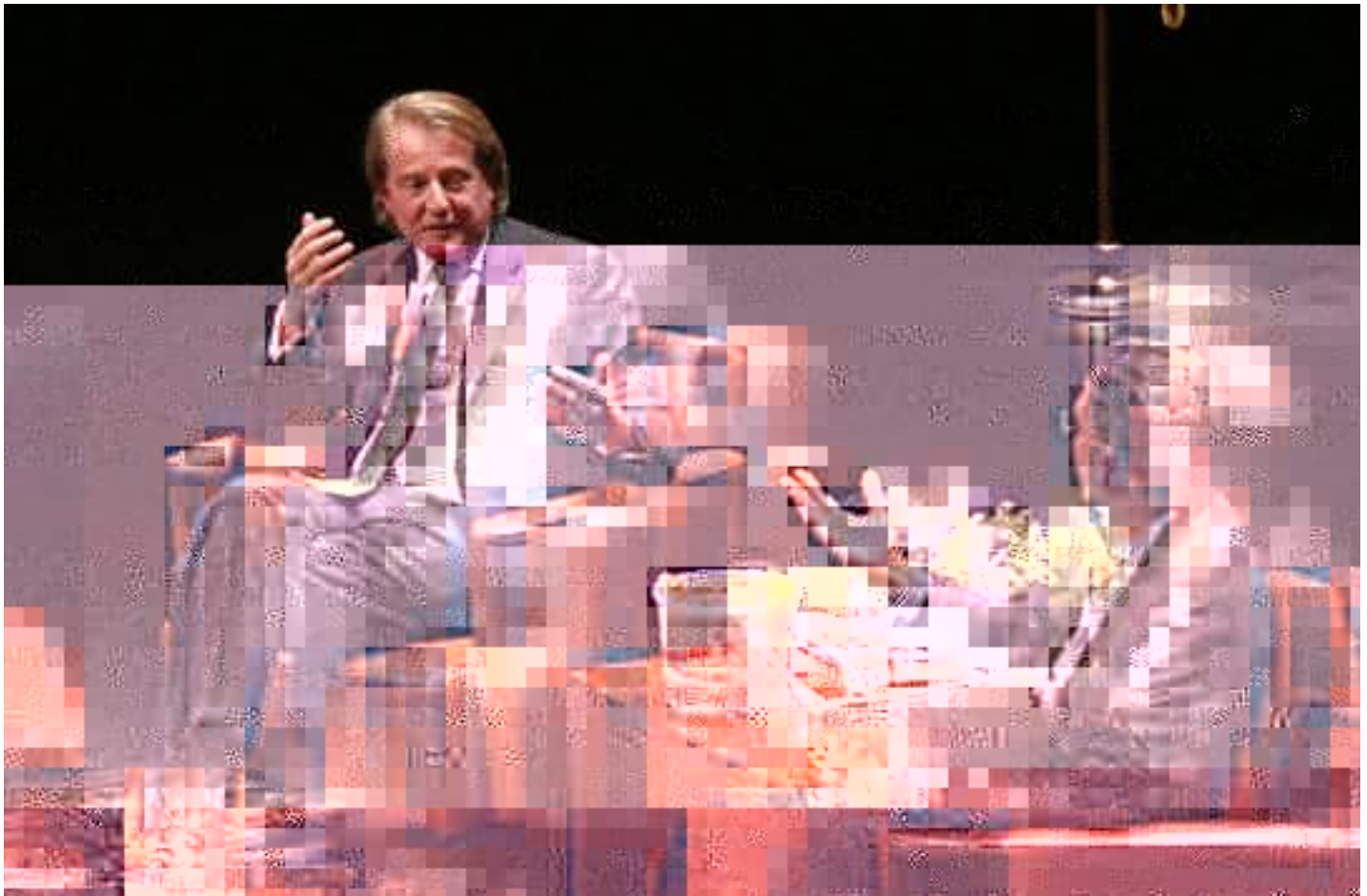
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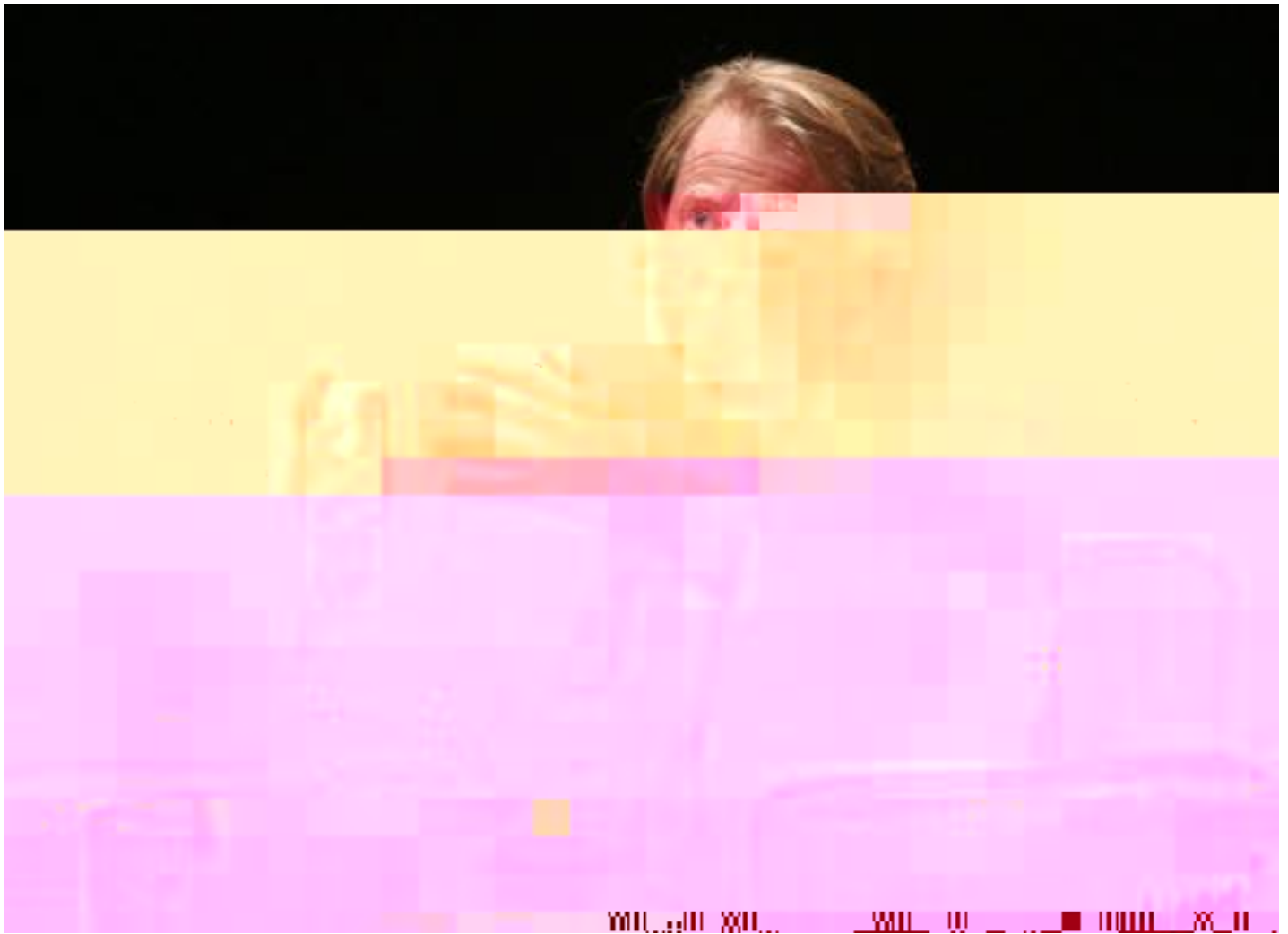
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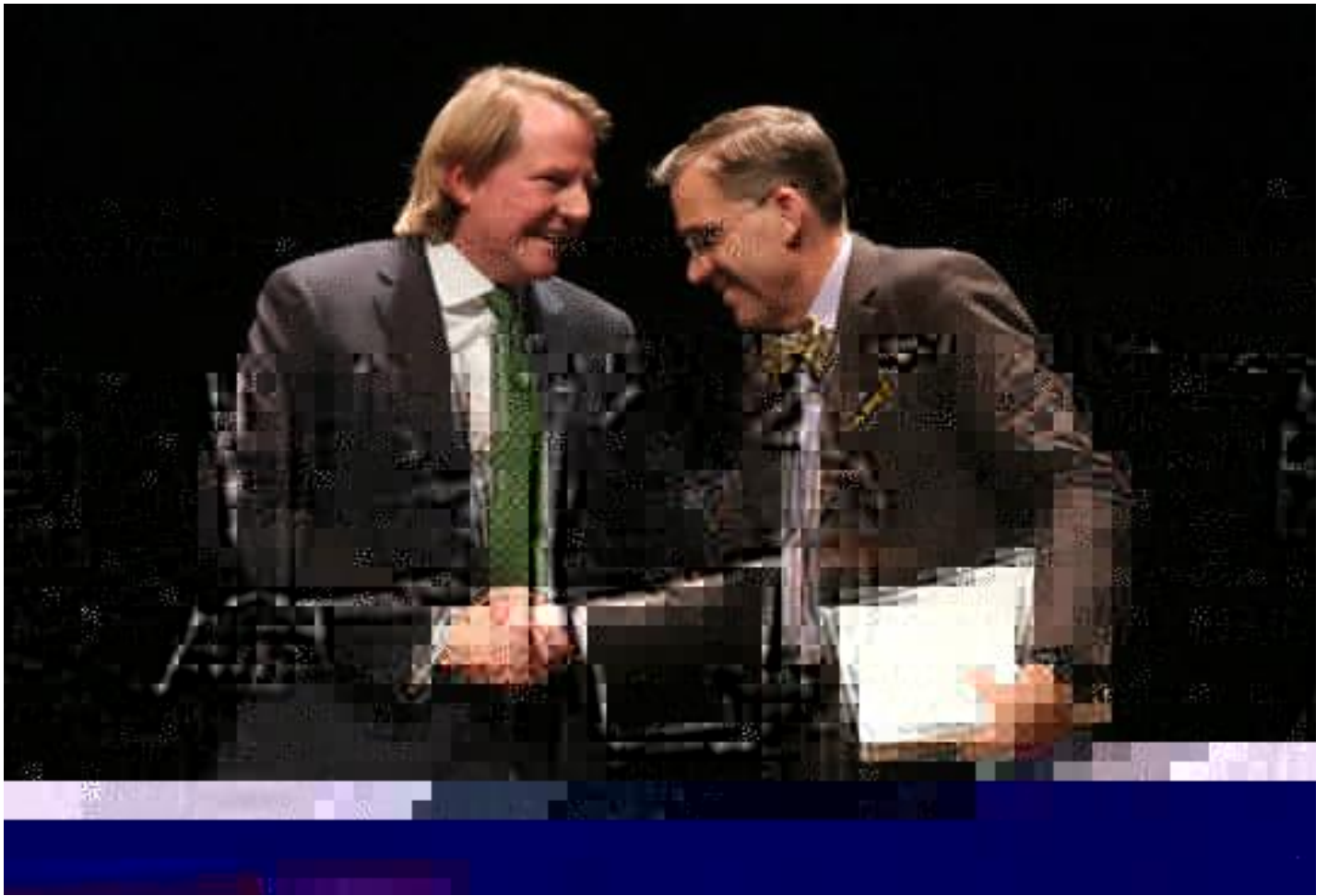
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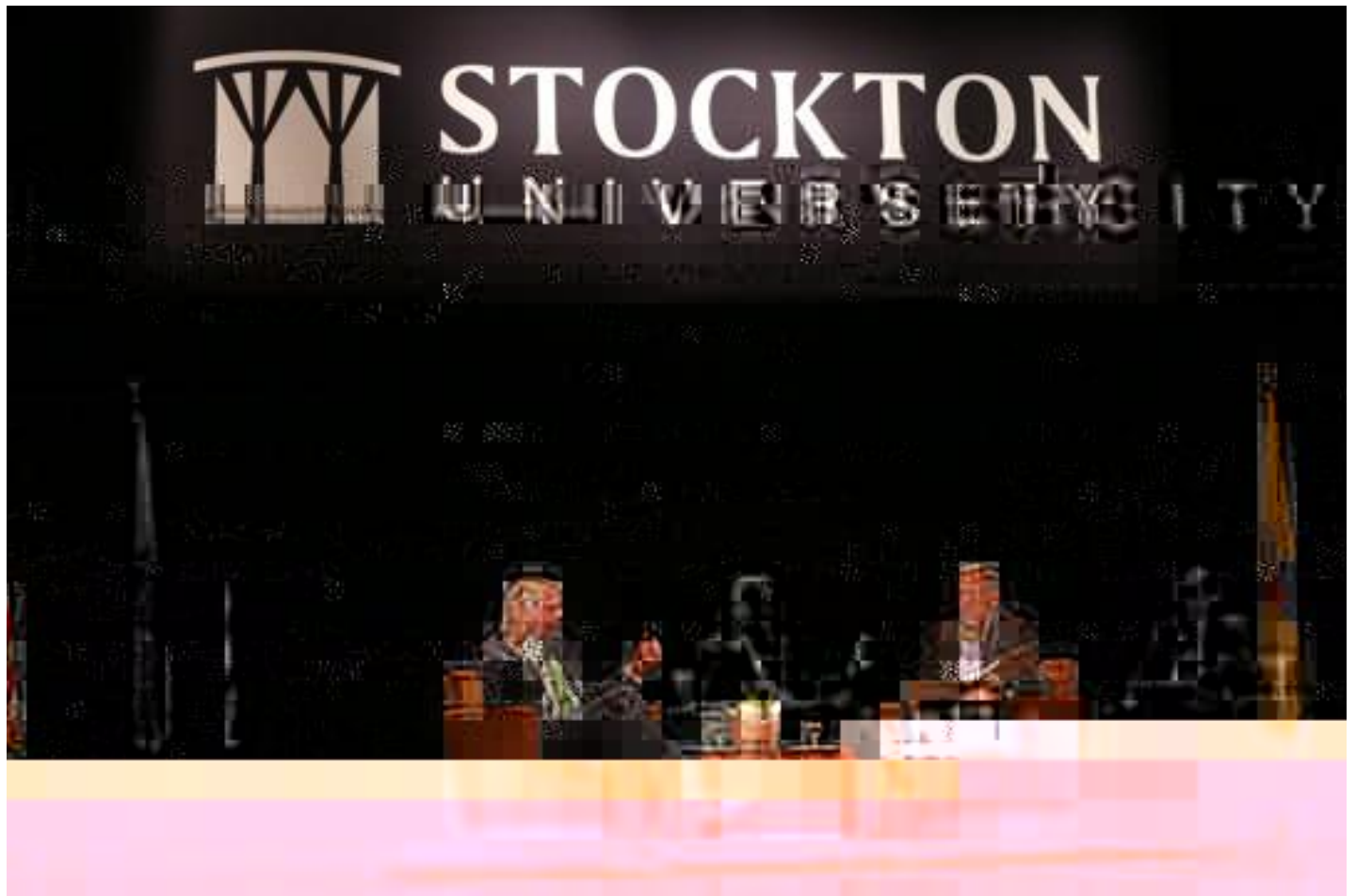
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