



Background Guide

Don't Look Up

1 | Responding to the upcoming extinction-level comet Dibiasky

JEJUMUN IX

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Date of Conference

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Committee Introduction

The *Don't Look Up* Crisis committee takes place in America, 6 months before an extinction-level impact event will occur on Earth. Kate Dibiasky, an Astronomy Ph.D. candidate at Michigan College, discovers an unknown comet angling toward Earth and shows this to Dr. Randall Mindy, her professor. Following this event, the two discover that the unknown comet will decimate Earth, and reports this to NASA and the White House. Nevertheless, not a single individual seems to believe the two astronomers, and most people regard their discovery as a mere myth for media content. People of different occupations react to the incoming comet differently: some for political marketing, some for media attraction, and others simply disregard it. Having such a difference in their stances, characters and social groups go through conflicts with one another, claiming that their plan for responding to the comet is the most reasonable. In this committee, the delegates' ultimate goal is to reach a consensus and decide on the most effective and reasonable solution for the ongoing debate on how to respond to the planet killer comet.

As opposed to other Crisis Committees that are usually based on historical events, in this Crisis committee, delegates will be representing the characters from the movie, *Don't Look Up* by Adam McKay. The characters range vastly from a politician to a host of a television program, allowing room for delegates to come up with distinctive and creative solutions for the agenda in the shoes of their characters. Since the committee is based on a film, delegates are highly encouraged to watch *Don't Look Up* to get into character and begin to devise their stances, which all would aid the process of establishing the general direction and flow of the committee.

However, this is not to say that the delegates must follow exactly what their assigned characters did in the actual film. Delegates should adopt their characters' personalities but still, it is essential for them to incorporate their own creativity, logic, and background knowledge to set up their stances for the conference. Again, although a timeline of events and a general overview of *Don't Look Up* will be given, this is why watching the actual movie is recommended to the delegates.

Agenda Introduction

Kate Dibiasky, an astronomy PhD candidate in Michigan state university, discovers a new comet. As discovering a comet requires meeting complex standards, Professor Mindy and Kate, excited about the new discovery, run diagnostics and calculations on the comet. They discover that the comet is what is commonly called a planet killer. This planet killer is 8~10 kilometers across and is set to hit Earth in 6 months and 14 days from discovery.

It is common knowledge for astronomers that the Chicxulub, a comet existing 65 million years ago that led dinosaurs into extinction, was 10~12 kilometers across, similar to comet Dibiasky. The impact of the Chicxulub was deadly. 65 million years ago, due to Chicxulub, more than 75% of the Earth's species went extinct as well as the formation of a crater 180 kilometers radius from where the comet hit. Comparing the impact of the Chicxulub to Comet Dibiasky, it was 99.7% sure that the comet will directly hit Earth and possibly cause the extinction of humans.

After reporting the news to NASA and Teddy oglethorpe, the head of Planetary Defense, Kate and Professor Mindy fly to Washington DC to share this crucial information with President Orleans, only to get the response of "sit tight and access". With the President of the United States not believing in the news, Dr. Oglethorpe recommends sharing the news to the Daily Rip, a famous TV show run by Brie Evantee and Jack Bremmer, two co-hosts. Kate loses her control and turns the entire media of the US against her while Professor Mindy gains approval from the public by his looks.

With 3 days wasted, 6 months and 11 days are remaining to act upon this issue. Yet, the media and the public are hostile against Kate as well as the news. Although delegates may or may not believe the news, it is a common goal for all, that no one wants the extinction of the human species.

Letter from the Chairs

Hello delegates, our names are RJ Baek, Anna Kim, and Eleanor Auo. It is our honor to serve you as chair of the Don't Look Up crisis committee in JEJUMUN IX. Since COVID-19, offline conferences have rarely been held, and we cannot put into words how exciting it is for us to meet you all and have a fruitful face-to-face discussion during the conference day.

MUN, especially crisis committees, requires a thorough understanding of basic contents, confidence in expressing your characters, and creative communication skills to spur invigorating discussions you will have within your committee. This crisis committee in particular, is based on a fictional film in which there are fewer limitations on demonstrating your creativity and coherence. Such fundamental characteristics of this committee will, to a certain extent, require you all to perform the aforementioned qualities, as they will act as necessary driving factors that elicit a more engaging and vigorous debate.

Although this may sound daunting for some of you, please be noted that there is nothing for you to fear as long as you are prepared with your general stances and arguments beforehand. If there is any confusion regarding the committee or the background guide, please feel free to contact us via email.

Sincerely,

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Key Terms

Comet

A celestial body of frozen gasses, rock, and dust that has an eccentric orbit. When frozen, they are usually the size of a small town. If a comet is 10 kilometers across or larger and carries an energy of more than about 100 million megatons, it is likely that it leads to a mass extinction when it collapses with Earth.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is an independent agency of the United States government that is responsible for conducting space programs, aeronautic research, and space research.

Media Training

Form of communication for understanding and interacting with media. When a person needs media training, he or she requires a better understanding of the media industry and what makes captivating news.

BASH

The tech conglomerate recently released BASH Liif, a device that can track one's vitals, identify one's mood, and present media to calm oneself. BASH is one of the greatest global digital titans involved in governmental decision-making. In *Don't Look Up*, BASH supports the government in its efforts to send a spaceship to combat the comet. BASH is also the company that designs a sleeper spaceship, which is to escape Earth and find an Earth-like planet, carrying a selective group of people.

The Daily Rip

A trending morning show hosted by Brie Evantee and Jack Bremmer. Influential source of media for American citizens which is used by President Orleans to rebrand Dr. Randall Mindy into a symbol of propaganda for the "Don't Look Up" campaign.

Kinetic Impaction

A way of deflecting an asteroid by sending one or several spaceships to the direction of the comet in order to collide the two, steering the comet away from Earth's orbit

Contextual Background

The political background in the context of Don't Look Up mainly sheds light on President Janie Orlean and the White House's corrupt actions. President Janie Orleans was elected president almost 4 years ago since the setting of the committee. Now that the midterm presidential election season is here once again, President Orlean and her party are busy preparing for their campaign for the upcoming election. Although Orlean is indeed preoccupied with her campaign, she still manages to arrange her social life with politicians who have claimed their positions through unjust routes. All of this becomes the factor that causes President Orlean to disregard Dr.Mindy and Kate Dibiasky's emergency report.

Meanwhile, in the technological field, Peter Isherwell, a close friend of President Orleans and the CEO of BASH, presents a new phone called BASH LiiF. According to Peter Isherwell, BASH LiiF can analyze the user's mood, influencing the algorithms to arrange in accordance with the mood of the user. This innovative phone is soon to become widely acclaimed by the public.

In the world of celebrities, the media is heated up with Riley Bina and DJ Cello's breakup. Instead of yielding a spot for significant issues, media headlines are dominated by the couple's breakup.

In Michigan, astronomy PhD candidate Kate Dibiasky discovers a new comet, the size of Mt. Everest, hurtling towards Earth. Dibiasky's professor, Dr. Randall Mindy of Michigan State University, confirms these findings. Amidst the corrupt political field, innovative technological field, and the ornamental and appealing, yet overvalued celebrity gossip, the two have to find a way to report their findings and spread the word to the public to find possible solutions to prevent the human race from extinction.

Stances of Parties

Dr. Randall Mindy

An astronomy professor at Michigan State University who is also a teacher of Kate Dibiasky. He confirms and reports Kate Dibiasky's discovery of an apocalyptic comet that will collide with Earth in 6 months. After his appearance in the *Daily Rip*, he earns the title of being "sexy" and becomes a public figure. He is diagnosed with mental illnesses such as anxiety which he treats with Xanax and Zoloft (medication). The symptoms of his mental illnesses are displayed more often as he begins to appear on media more frequently.

June Mindy

Dr. Randall Mindy's wife who is left with her two sons in Michigan while Dr. Mindy is gone to New York. Her utmost priority is to keep the family together and is wishing for Dr. Mindy's safety. With her calm and caring nature, she takes responsibility for her two kids while Mindy is busy in New York, dealing with his public life.

Kate Dibiasky

Astronomy PhD candidate at Michigan State University. She discovers an unknown comet that will hit Earth in 6 months. Kate is quick to temper, which causes a great controversy in the media. After her appearance in the *Daily Rip*, in which she has yelled "We are going to die", she quickly becomes a "meme" and the public harasses Kate for being mentally ill. With some media exposure, Kate has both haters and followers, although she is most concerned with the upcoming comet rather than her public reputation. She shares some of the medications that Dr. Randall Mindy takes.

Dr. Teddy Oglethorpe

Head of Nasa's Planetary Defense Coordination Office. He helps Dibiasky and Mindy to report their findings to the White House. Holding delicate and valuable information regarding the comet while having the most authority amongst Kate Dibiasky and Dr. Randall Mindy, he helps them to reach the crucial information regarding the comet to President Orlean in the White House.

Jason Orlean

Son of President Janie Orlean. Chief of Staff of the White House. He is a highly impudent person who does not hesitate to comment on and criticize others. He makes fun of Dr. Mindy for being a "nerd" and using statistics to explain the situation. Taking full advantage of being the President's son, he often disrespects those who he thinks are inferior to him. He sides with President Orlean and supports every idea that she proposes- as of now, he believes that there is no comet.

Janie Orlean

President of the United States of America who believes that there is no comet coming towards Earth. She is busy preparing for the upcoming presidential election with her son Jason Orleans. Although her arrogant and frank way of speech is a controversy for the citizens of the US, she has charmed her way to becoming the President of the United States.

Peter Isherwell

A reclusive billionaire and the founder and CEO of Bash corporation who is one of Orlean's top donors and business partners. As a businessman, Peter is ambitious, looking for ways to maximize his profit from everything possible, whether it be politics or technology. Peter recently launched a phone from his BASH corporation called BASH LiiF.

Jack Bremmer

The co-host of *The Daily Rip*, a frivolous morning talk show. As he is a public figure with a media image to maintain, he tries to make light of every situation, resulting in Kate's anger. As a public figure of a talk show, Jack Bremmer starts the committee with a neutral stance on the comet and does not deny nor accept the comet's existence.

Brie Evantee

The Co-host of *The Daily Rip*. While maintaining a good image in the public, with her looks, she seduces many men to have an affair with her. As a public figure of a talk show, Brie Evantee starts the committee with a neutral stance on the comet and does not deny nor accept the comet's existence.

Yule

A shoplifter who is a fan of Kate Dibiasky's and serves Kate as a prophetic figure. Although being a strong supporter and believer of the existence of the comet, Yule has no public influence.

Riley Bina

A popular singer who has high influence over the media with the news of her breakup with DJ chello.

DJ Chello

A famous rapper who is in a relationship with Riley Bina. Has great influence on social media as well.

Phillip Kaj

Kate's boyfriend (former) who works as a journalist for a popular website- Autopsy. Kaj has some influence over the newspaper, controlling what may or may not be perceived by the public.

Colonel Benedict Drask

A colonel chosen to be sent to outer space to combat comet Dibiasky. Colonel Drask does not really care about the comet's existence. Instead, he is solely focused on his own achievements as a public and political figure in the United States of America.

Adul Grelio

Senior editor at the New York Herald who decides Kate and Professor Mindy's appearance on the Daily-Rip. Has major power over what is presented in the media.

Dan Pawketty

Host of Patriot News Network who is critical about the comet and government officials' response towards it. Pawketty does not believe that there is an actual comet that will hit Earth in six months.

Possible Solutions

Support BASH and large companies for designing technology for a mass exodus of humanity to a new, hospitable planet

With the advanced technology of BASH in hands with government funding and global organizations, chosen populations might be able to travel to outer space and settle on a newly found planet. Since earth will become uninhabitable, the first mission for survival would be to search for and move to an alternative environment favorable to basic survival. If key companies and organizations of the global economy unite and financially support tech giants for establishing and planning a mass exodus to a new planet, a selective number of people from each country may be able to travel to a new environment. There, they might have a chance to restart the history of humanity. After all, this solution will come down to the debate on who gets to go and who does not. Depending on the delegates' stances, this solution might be reached based on ethical, or practical grounds.

Deflect the comet through kinetic impaction

This solution also involves the construction of advanced technology. Sending man-made spaceships to the direction of the comet to deflect it to a different trajectory can prevent mass extinction on Earth. Since the company who builds the spaceship will be able to access potentially rich and new resources from the comet, this solution could stir a debate upon which country and company gets to authorize and lead the spacecraft-building process.

Questions to Consider

1. In the midst of a chaos, important facts are blurred by attention grabbers on media that serve as simple click bait. What should people focus on? How can they dehaze unimportant attention grabbers to see the urgency of the issue?
2. Do the characters have different vested interests on this issue?
3. Is choosing only a selective number of people for a rescue plan ethically just, or is it practical? In this case, does practicality outweigh ethics?

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