

**DEMOCRACY CORPS
GROUP 2
COLUMBUS, OH
MEN, WHITE, AGES 45-60, NON-COLLEGE, UNDER 50K HH INCOME,
WEAK PARTISAN, MAX 4 UNION MEMBER
MARCH 6, 2006, 8:00 PM**

I'm Al and I live pretty close to here. I've got a 14-year-old daughter. I'm an animal technician.

I'm Bruce and I live on the west side. I'm retired from the military. I've got three children and now they are in North Carolina and I'm basically here. And my ex wife is having fun with her new husband and doctor, which I put her through college. 21 years, gentleman. But my new wife, she's great.

I'm Charlie and I live in Hilliard. I have two kids. I have a floor covering business, which I do part-time because I'm staying home with my girls. I try to keep the boys away from the door.

I'm David and I live in Powell, not far from here. I work for Home Depot in Hilliard. Also, USA Today, as a side job, since I've been downsized twice in my career. I have four kids, one in the Air Force, one is in college and two at home, a daughter and a son.

I'm Ed and I live in Westerville and I'm in sales. I have a couple little darlings, one is at home and one is off and running. Been married thirty years, been lucky I guess.

I'm Frank and I've got five kids. I'm a manager of a small independent grocery store. I live in Columbus.

I'm Gary and I live in Plain City, retired. I've got twin children and stepchildren. I've got ten and eighteen grandchildren. I don't work, but I'm missing it.

I'm Hank and live in Worthington, work for Nationwide in customer service. When not doing that, I do theatrical props, costumes, make-up and a bit of writing. I have one kid left at home. He's 13 and taking up track in junior high school.

I'm Ivan, unemployed. Been married for 33 years, two children, five grandchildren. I like to hunt and fish.

I'm James and I have been married 30 years. I have two sons, they both have a bachelor's degree from Ohio State. And one is going for his Master's right now. As far as hobbies, I played all kinds of sports until last year. I had a cancer and I just got over it and hopefully I will get back into playing a lot of sports again.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO START OUR CONVERSATION REAL BROAD. THINKING ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT’S GOING ON WITH OUR COUNTRY RIGHT NOW, ARE THINGS GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION OR IN THE WRONG DIRECTION?

Wrong.

Wrong.

Wrong.

Wrong.

I agree with what a lot of people are saying, but I also disagree. The world economy is bad, but we have the third best economy in the world. And for that, I am grateful.

MODERATOR—WHAT THINGS ARE GOING WRONG?

The economy is doing fine if you are a corporation or high enough in the food chain. Otherwise, you are a little fish about to be thrown into the piranha tank.

I have to agree with that, being a small business guy. Unless you’ve got the right connections, the government is not out there for you. You are on your own.

Definitely not.

They are out for the big guys.

MODERATOR—WHAT IN PARTICULAR MAKES YOU FEEL THAT WAY?

Me being a small, independent grocery store, when the WIC program and the food stamp program came out, they changed their policies. Myers, Krogers, Big Bear, Wal-Mart, got all the plans. The small independents, it took them a year to get that program. We didn’t know anything about it. They’d come in and say, you guys accept WIC coupons? What are WIC coupons? What’s a food stamp card? And we had to investigate it to find out what’s going on. And then we had to sign up for it and it took a year to get it. And that’s just us. The government said, here...and that’s what happened to the small pharmaceuticals. The government took it away from them. It was too hard for them to work. Too expensive, too much money to owe back.

The mom and pops, the independents are virtually non-existent any more. You don’t find it. You get a little carry-out, that’s about it. That’s about all that exists as far as mom and pops go.

That’s true. And Bush is saying, that’s the backbone of our country, the small grocer, the small person, but you can’t afford to be in business.

Where are they?

Yeah.

Texas, I guess.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON?

I think that the center that is hurt the worst is the farming. A lot of these programs are being taken away from the farmers. And if you are small, you can't just farm nothing else.

I think the biggest hit that probably affects everybody from sales right on down the line is manufacturing jobs being sent out, blaming it on high wages and everything. China and India are just exploding. They are probably eating up all our oil and gas, truth be known. They have exploding economies. America has been built on unions and coal mines and steel mills and manufacturing, building stuff. And manufacturing jobs create a hell of a lot of spin-off jobs too. Four or five guys are feeding that guy at the factory.

The paradigm of the information age economy. But the thing is, the information age economy is only in the central hubs. And the rest of America is the way it was in the early 20th century.

Except without the jobs.

Without those better paying jobs, people aren't going to buy cars or houses or tennis shoes for their kids or washer/dryers, whatever you've got to buy.

What can you buy on hamburger wages? That's what I keep telling people. What are you going to buy on hamburger wages?

I grew up with farmers and no one I know can farm for a living. They have a job and then they'll farm in the evenings and on weekends.

The gap between us guys and the multi millionaires, the CEO's...my cousin is a CEO of a big corporation. It's tremendous what these guys make. And they've got golden parachutes if they get laid off or fired. We get laid off or fired, we are lucky to get unemployment. These guys just got...it's a hell of a swing. When they make 100 times more than the guy in the plant or job site or whatever the case. It's just too big of a swing. These guys are making multi....

Remember what they said about the Good Will, Salvation Army and so forth, CEO.....three years ago on 60 Minutes, that guy made a million plus then. And they've got all these volunteers working for nothing, but yet the head honchos, you give them this money.

Like David has been downsized a couple times, that's why I got out of the building trades.

It's hard to get a job when you are 52. Talk about discrimination, it's really there. That really hurts. You've got to work twice as hard.

I've got two jobs to try to make it work.

Supposedly poor people, they are getting cut. What little help you can get, you just don't get anymore.

MODERATOR—WHERE DOES IT ALL GO?

It's concentrating.

Iraq, a lot of it. Billions of dollars they are spending over there and putting us in debt that we'll never ever get out of.

MODERATOR—TALK TO ME ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS ON THE SITUATION IN IRAQ.

My son is over there, so I'm a little concerned. It's the Middle East and it's been going forever. It's just a different day. Same difference. There's always violence and terrorism.

That's religious.

It's always been that way.

(many talking at once)

But to be honest, when you saw Bush pick his cabinet, was anyone surprised when we went to Iraq for any reason? They were making comic books about...jokes about how Saddam, you tried to kill my father, prepare to die. And we see that all the arguments that we have for being there were manufactured or twisted or spun or whatever you want. I'm all for the war in Afghanistan. They were a terrorist state that supported the people that attacked us. But the organization that attacked us split from Saudi Arabia because they weren't allowed to go after Saddam Hussein. There was no connection. So, we've been scammed.

I think there were two....I'm not saying that I necessarily agree with these reasons, but there were two reasons to go there. One was, look at the leader of Iran right now, if Hussein and him got together, it would be too much. But the other thing is, if you destroy Iraq and then rebuild it, it will boost the world economy all the way. And if you

are one of the countries that destroyed it, you'll get first dibs on boosting your country's economy.

I had two kind of points on that that I think are important to say about it. One, basically, our fair share of taxes and so forth, if you are not working, you are not paying taxes. And you were talking about groceries and so forth, when the World Trade Center was blown up, I go into a mini mart and these people are in this country, don't pay taxes for seven years. They are free. Then they just pass it onto their brothers and so forth, so it's endless. They never have to pay any taxes. But the thing that got me, there were seven Iranians in there, the TV is on, they see the towers coming down, (much laughing), and I'm looking around burning. I thought about doing something, but there was seven against one. I ain't stupid. It's things like that that irk me and that's what is hurting this country.

MODERATOR—REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT WHY WE GOT THERE, GIVEN WHERE WE ARE TODAY, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

I like the Pottery Barn motto, you broke it, you own it. But I think perhaps we should extend out responsibility for this. I mean when we walked in, you were saying the people who come in who helped destroy it, will get all the money. Those that didn't agree with the arguments were getting cut out. Now we are not going to let in all these countries in Europe who could provide infrastructure and manpower and whatever, are cut out so that we can keep our share of the pie and our share of the IED's and everything else. I think we need to expand out to be able to do anything.

Dick Cheney.

I kind of agree. I think we need to get some of our troops out and put some other troops in there to do it. But as long as they are there, there's going to be fighting. They are going to be fighting against them. We could leave them there for a hundred years and they'd still be fighting.

What have they accomplished in the time they've been there?

We are trying to set a democracy up over there, isn't that right?

They've taken the population down a lot.

(many talking at once)

The money is going where it was before we even went over there. The big boys are getting the money. The little guy isn't getting anything. Never has and never will.

It's like Monsanto stepped in and now Iraqi farmers who for generations or centuries would take like one tenth part of their crops as seed to plant for the next year. Monsanto gave them the seed and said, you can't do that anymore because we own that seed. We

own the copyright on that plant. You have to buy new seed from us next year and that's what we've supported.

MODERATOR—ARE WE ACCOMPLISHING ANYTHING?

I think we are about 90% there and it's time to start....

Let them run their democracy.

I think we are close to leaving.

I've got one point. When you think about it, Vietnam, who was there first? The French. Look what happened there? Middle East where we are at now, who was there? The French. What did they do? And then we are back in there.

The French didn't want to go back in there.

They were smart.

MODERATOR—WHAT HAVE YOU GUYS HEARD ABOUT THIS CONTROVERSY THAT'S BEEN IN THE MEDIA LATELY ABOUT A STATE OWNED COMPANY FROM THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TAKING CONTROL OF MAJOR US PORTS?

That's amazing if that got through.

The powers that be, how in the hell they look the other way on that kind of stuff.

That's amazing.

Where have we been, 9/11 and then they turn around and just sub that out. We can make more money with these guys running it.

I think they are scared of them. Now it's getting to be so....what's the word...arrogant about everything. They've got too much of a God thing, you know.

MODERATOR-WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK ABOUT THIS PORT SITUATION?

I think it's wrong just from the ramifications of what happened with 9/11.

We can't monitor our own ports, how are we going to monitor a foreign country's ports?

(many talking at once)

It's a foreign organization anyway.

I wonder why this country can't. Why did they have to put the British in there to do it?

MODERATOR—WHAT IS THE REAL ISSUE HERE? IS IT THE FACT THAT IT'S AN ARAB....

I think it's that that particular Arab country is the one that still recognizes the Taliban as the official government of Afghanistan. They tended to be linked more closely to terrorism than other Arab states. The only other one that is more closely linked is Saudi Arabia, but we are friends with them.

But looking at the opposite side, I agree with what everyone said, but look at the opposite side. US Customs is controlling and is in charge of all of that, and so we are still in control.

You are to a point, but....

(many talking at once)

I don't know how much control we really have.

(many talking at once)

There aren't too many people that have seen much of it. It's all wilderness and if they want to come across, they can come across any time. And we don't have enough customs people to...the Coast Guard can't.

I was just talking about the ports.

But even them, the Coast Guard can't even keep up with them.

We honestly can't depend on our border security. Every year I'd go up and down to Niagara Falls. Going into Canada, I'd have to show my birth certificate and driver's ID, and sometime around midnight coming in underneath a bridge into New York, the guy looked at the Ohio plates and went, oh okay, go on.

Where these terrorists came across the border into Maine, that little town up there has a population of about 150 people. And probably three quarters of the town are Canadians anyway. So, they are back and forth and nobody pays any attention.

MODERATOR—HAS THIS WHOLE PORTS ISSUE KIND OF AFFECTED THE WAY YOU THINK OF PRESIDENT BUSH?

It has only because it's such a 180 degree turn from what he's been doing. How could you accept that? Just being so blasé about it.

Absolutely.

Rich Arabs and Bush says, I'll derail any attempt to stop this. And two and two makes at least four and a half. It's Bush being Bush again.

I think it's the worst thing he's done for a long time. I think it's showing in his numbers obviously. They are going down in the low 40's popularity wise.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU, HAS IT AFFECTED THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT BUSH?

Yes.

I couldn't think less of him, so...

Yeah. I think it does too. But I also believe that it's going to give the democratic party the support for the presidential election.

MODERATOR—HAS IT IMPACTED THE WAY YOU LOOK AT CONGRESS?

Uh-hum.

I just changed my view on congress seeing how republicans turned on him. I was rather impressed that the republicans actually stood up and said, this is a national security issue, not a money and commerce issue.

Congress, I like, for once, for now.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THESE VIDEOTAPES THAT CAME OUT LAST NIGHT OF BUSH BEING BRIEFED ABOUT KATRINA BEFORE THE STORM CAME AND GETTING WARNED ABOUT ALL THE THINGS THAT COULD HAPPEN. DID ANYBODY HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT THAT?

Oh yes, I heard about that.

It just kind of showed him in a room with some other people talking about it. And they said, well, yeah you knew about it because here he is in the room talking about with them. Whether or not...

This is when he was on vacation down in Texas and they were showing the...

This is when it all came down, he was still on vacation.

Right.

They must have a special briefing room at the Crawford ranch because it showed a fairly official looking site.

Oh yeah, I'm sure they do.

That FEMA guy, I think he really got his head taken off. Mike Brown or whatever...I think they took his head off. And really laid it on him. It sounds like he worked his butt off and....of course he's running the FEMA, so he's going to take the hit.

Last year was one of the worst years we've ever had. How many hurricanes did we have?

A record amount of hurricanes.

You can only spread yourself so much and so far.

New Orleans has always been the beater in the bag theory. You think you are going to get hit and you never have. Well it finally did and it was only category three and they got just totally wiped out. I don't think anybody really believed it. That was the whole problem.

What kind of scared me about the whole thing....but if they reacted or if our government reacted like they did, it could have been anything else and would there have been any difference? Would the main people say, well, we've got our own agenda here.

(many talking at once)

But yet, we are going to spend a billion dollars overseas. That gets me.

They had pictures on the TV the other night, all these mobile homes down there just sinking into the mud. And people don't have ...they've been living in these tents with no bathrooms or anything.

Or hotel rooms.

Or cruise ships.

They are just going to lose them in the mud because nobody is qualifying. Let somebody use the darn things.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO THROW OUT THE NAMES OF SOME PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONS AND I WANT TO GET YOUR FIRST REACTION. THE FIRST ONE IS BILL CLINTON.

He's going to be like Jimmy Carter. He's getting more famous now.

He's married to the next president.

He got a big black eye when I heard he was lobbying for the Dubai ports operation.

Yeah, well eight years of the best financial in this whole country.

(many talking at once)

I always said that if the rest of the presidents got a little sex in the back room like he did, the country would be running a lot better.

(many talking at once)

He's okay.

Most people made a decent amount of money when he was in there and we didn't have the record budget deficits. He got caught and...

He's a good politician and he had good people under him that actually did their job.

I'm pretty funny about the situation. Just like they said, he got caught.

I think he printed that got caught line.

MODERATOR-HOW ABOUT DICK CHENEY?

Bull shitter.

What has he done?

Was he in there on ENRON too?

Halliburton.

That was Bush. Bush was in on that.

Yeah, him and his daddy.

He's typical big corporate.

Strip mine the Rockies and put in a theme park when you are done.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT TOM DELAY?

Most corrupt son of a bitch we've had in a long time.

He loves the payoff, loves the grease.

He's in bed with most lobbyists.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT JARED BROWN?

Running for democratic senate. From what I've seen of him, he's for abortion and he basically bashes republican politics. And I think he must have some more solid issues if you want to run for senate.

High name recognition.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HIM?

Not enough.

Is he in the Cleveland area?

I think so.

All I know is that he ended up being involved in the power play that pushed Hackett out of the way. Hackett I would have voted for, Jared it's like, I'll vote against whoever is running against him.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT MIKE DEWINNE?

He's getting a lot of notice lately.

He's from the Cincinnati area like the governor is.

I kind of like him. I've always thought DeWinne was pretty sharp.

He's on WLW a lot.

And in the news, there's always conflicting stories back and forth about him. Flip flops, that's what I'm thinking.

Politician.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT HILLARY CLINTON?

High name recognition.

She'll probably have a big run. There's a lot of people in New York.

She actually is the senator for the area up in upstate New York where a lot of my wife's family is. And I mean, there are people that absolutely hated her to the point of throwing bricks at her, but she still got elected in that section. So, no matter what people feel about her as a ball-breaking bitch among other things, she's a good politician also. Like her better half or her other half.

But look at how much she spent on her election. Wasn't it like 50 or 40 million? Look at DeWinne, he has two million dollars in her campaign fund, compared to what she does.

She'll probably run. I'll be surprised if she doesn't run.

Don't trust her as far as I can throw her.

I think she's a smart woman to go through what she's been through.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE NOTION OF HER RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT?

Strong woman.

People either like her or hate her. No in between.

And to be honest, whatever happened in the Clinton presidency, she was probably half of the Clinton presidency. No matter what anyone says. She wasn't home baking cookies.

She had a lot of...

She was a big failure in trying to get the unified health care system, first thing out, but besides that the two of them worked well together.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT SCOOTER LIBBY?

Weasel supreme.

Somebody in trouble.

He's Cheney's chief of staff and the one who supposedly outed (inaudible). He got the information from other reporters or from his superiors.

Is that his real name?

He goes by Scooter. Coming from the south where you have Bubba and Cooter and everyone else.

Exactly.

That's true.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT JACK ABRAMOFF?

Oh, big time crook.

He's more corrupt than DeLay.

He's a real successful lobbyist that got caught.

This is the guy who took money frombut now he's talking, which should be entertaining.

Just another one.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT CONGRESS?

They are always in bed with somebody.

All the lobbyists.

Once they get down on the congressional tour, then they flip to lobbyists. It's just constant grease. Constant.

In polite terms, in congress means being screwed. I think that's pretty much how our government works.

They make any used car wholesaler look good. From the old days when they used to clean them up and clock the cars, these guys in congress make those guys look legitimate.

I think it's a bunch of people that have found out how to use the system to their benefit. You hear about them and the things that they do and trips they take....

If they stopped the waste, we wouldn't be in trouble.

Right.

Or the nonsense. Like the whole Terry Shiavo thing where they had a midnight session to set up an act of congress to have the courts stop her from being killed. Any constitutional lawyer would have said, this is a waste of time guys. But they had a right wing constituency that they were supporting that got the votes.

I was talking about the government and congress and so forth, but one problem I see here in Ohio is and it's probably nationwide, is think for a second...who owns the newspapers here?

Those guys.

Who owns the radio stations here? Who owns the TV stations here? What kind of story are you really getting when you think about it.

MODERATOR—OKAY. OTHER THOUGHTS ON CONGRESS?

There's a lot of history and a lot of compassion for the way our country was founded. I used to live in Washington DC and I used to go down there and sit and watch all that stuff.

We are all jaded and old. We hear all this shit all the time. There are guys who are trying to do a good job, I'm sure, especially guys who are just starting out. And all those multi-term guys, I just....

Like you are saying, that's the thing. You don't hear about the guys that are working for you. You hear about the guys that working it.

Yeah.

You don't hear about anybody else.

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK THE CURRENT CONGRESS IS MORE CORRUPT THAN THE PAST?

These guys are pretty damn corrupt. They are getting a lot of headlines.

A work in progress.

I think they need to stay out of people issues and focus more on the country. They get involved in stuff that they shouldn't even be involved with.

MODERATOR—LIKE WHAT?

That Shiavo woman someone was talking about. Why were they involved in that when you have courts and doctors saying one thing and them wanting to do something else. And there is other stuff they do too. They need to stay focused on the issues of the country.

Why couldn't I be arrogant if I had control of the military, the peace departments, the judges, right on down the line, who is going to stop me? I don't like something, I break the law, I change the law.

MODERATOR—DO YOU SEE ONE PARTY IN CONGRESS AS MORE CORRUPT THAN THE OTHER?

No.

No.

(many talking at once)

I think that there's been one party in power longer so they concentrated their power more that facilitated more corruption. But there's nothing more corrupt than a good democratic machine like Mayor Daley.

MODERATOR—WHY DOES CORRUPTION IN CONGRESS MATTER? HOW DOES IT IMPACT YOUR LIFE?

They are shaping our lives depending on their interests.

We are supposed to tell them what to do.

Exactly.

We are supposed to direct them basically.

Instead we are getting like million dollar bridges in Alaska to nowhere.

And with a population of less than 1,000 or something like that.

(many talking at once)

They are supposed to work for us basically. We get things said that we want to get done and they work for us.

MODERATOR—HOW IS THE CORRUPTION IN CONGRESS IMPACTING YOU?

This may not be what you are looking for, but they want to tap into natural gas underneath Lake Erie. That's going to affect us. That could lower some natural gas prices. We have a lot of oil underneath government parks, why can't we tap into some of that? It would help a little bit.

As far as I'm concerned, all the gas in the world ain't going to matter unless you've got people who are selling it to you. I've got a trillion gallons of gas and I'm going to sell it to you, and I've got a (inaudible) and by the time he's out is going to charge you \$5 a gallon.

But Bush would like to get that stuff out, but the democrats all fight and say no.

MODERATOR—LAST ONE I WANT TO TALK ABOUT GEORGE W. BUSH.
(HANDOUTS PASSED OUT) I WANT TO JUST DO HANDOUTS #1 AND #2. ON
HANDOUT #1, WRITE DOWN ALL THE GOOD THINGS THAT COME TO MIND
WHEN YOU THINK OF GEORGE W. BUSH AND ON HANDOUT #2 WRITE ALL
THE NOT SO GOOD THINGS. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE GOOD THINGS YOU
WROTE DOWN?

He seems friendly.

Basically moral too.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY MORAL?

As far as how you treat people. His attitudes about people's rights, right-to-life issues,
things like that.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE?

I think he has a strong foreign policy. I think he is a strong leader. And even last year,
this last term, he had all these things that he kept congress doing, working on a whole
bunch of stuff. He kept them busy. Even when he first took office, he immediately took
charge and tried to get things done. And he's not afraid of any country. I always think
what a sweet wife that he has. She's someone like the opposite of Hillary Clinton. He
gave us like the third best economy. And I think people don't like to hear this, but in the
last three years we did like 4.6 million new jobs in our country and that's like the most
like in a three-year period. I think he's truthful, honest and one of the most important
things, he believes in God and he's not afraid to share that.

I think the main thing in his presidency is all he's had to go through, 9/11 and the war,
and all these natural disasters that just keep coming and coming and coming. And then
healthcare costs. He's gone through just a tremendous amount...I don't know of any
president since FDR who has gone through the stuff that he's gone through. This is
perseverance and what he's had to do, along with just daily issues. I respect him for that.

Federal taxes, what he did for low income.

He's been for the millionaires more, but it helped everyone.

He wants to be liked, so he's probably not going to do anything too obviously hateful.
But he is working on building a legacy.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT #2 WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE THINGS
YOU WROTE DOWN?

Budget deficits, interest rates.

High energy prices.

High gas and oil.

A lot of that is probably China and India, I think. They are exploding over there and they are using a hell of a lot of oil and gas.

Finding and funding alternate fuel options is not really happening much. The car industry is just starting to trickle toward hybrids with electric and gas. That's coming...it's around the corner. We'll start seeing it and it will become more affordable in the next few years. It's just starting to trickle now.

They've got some good ones already.

My father-in-law lives in Iowa and there the ethanol is everywhere. You see ethanol prices that are ten to fifteen cents lower than regular prices. They are experimenting some with the soy diesel.

It gives farmers jobs.

Exactly. You can grow your fuel.

MODERATOR—WHAT OTHER DOUBTS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT BUSH?

He is in a small bubble of incredibly powerful rich people. He has more CEO's concentrated in his cabinet than you could ever believe. I understand one of the cabinet members is a former CEO of the company that now manufactures Tamiflu, which is of course the only known remedy for bird flu. Whenever I hear them start panicking about bird flu...bird flu, we sent 100,000 doses to Iraq. And the money is going somewhere.

This last little round on economics and bankruptcies that they pushed through. Now you are going to have to pay to go bankrupt and then you are going to have to go to school for six months while you try to eke out a living and that's going to cost you. Of course if you had that money, you wouldn't have probably gone bankrupt. It's like that catch 32 is it?

22.

Yeah.

He just gives the impression that he doesn't know what's going on a lot of the time. Just the impression I get.

May I say one last thing on the bankruptcy? I'm trying to remember...in the state of Ohio in October, 38,000 people were trying to beat that deadline on bankruptcies. When you look at the Columbus Dispatch, you only see one or two every Sunday. This Sunday,

I think they had none. But yet how can these thousands of people...it's going to be in the newspapers, but they are not in there.

MODERATOR—OKAY.

Why? They don't want to panic anybody.

MODERATOR—OTHER DOUBTS ABOUT BUSH?

This border patrol thing started getting me. All the influx of people coming over and boundaries both in Canada and California or Mexico. It's really...that's going to be an issue and it should be an issue. They need to really address it. And the Ford issue. Two things that really got my attention.

That burned my wagon. I had a government guy beating on my door here a little while back, we've got a government check for her because she's an immigrant from Mexico. She's having babies and you are giving her a \$28,000 check from my government. My taxes are paying for this woman having more children next door.

I don't like the hundred billion dollar deficit in China. It's a little much.

This guy is a butcher.

The man is a hypocrite. He talks about a culture of life and his time as governor of Texas, they killed more people as state executions than ever before. He talks about reading the bible every day and then when a reporter asks him what verse did he read that morning, he can't remember. Which may just mean he's dim, but...he plays to the Christian right and does not show any real values.

MODERATOR—WE TALKED ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY AND WE BARELY HAD ANYTHING GOOD TO SAY. IT WAS ALMOST ALL NEGATIVE IN TERMS OF WHERE THE COUNTRY IS HEADED RIGHT NOW. VERY LITTLE POSITIVE TO SAY ABOUT THE PRESIDENT VERSUS THE NEGATIVE. PRETTY MUCH NOTHING POSITIVE TO SAY ABOUT CONGRESS AT ALL. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH THE LEADERSHIP IN WASHINGTON AND HOW HAVE WE GOTTEN TO THIS POINT? AND WHAT'S GOING ON? HOW DID THINGS GET SO BAD THERE?

Pure greed.

Money.

Personal greed.

You have to have millions to get into that position and then you get paid off. But I mean, poor people can't run for congress.

Predominately lawyers. A lot of attorneys.

I think some of it too is big corporations are getting in there and getting their hands onto the congressmen. And then ...he's their boy.

(many talking at once)

MODERATOR—SO IT'S PERSONAL GREED, PEOPLE LOOKING OUT FOR THEMSELVES.

I think it's an influence.

Corporations, once they get a hold of a guy they won't let him

That's like when the Smart Card came out, the food stamp card, but when it came out, it could only be used in Ohio. It can't be used outside of the state. And no other states....and all the other states across the nation can go from state to state to state and use their food stamp cards. But the Smart Card can only be used in Ohio. Reason being is because (inaudible) brother-in-law has the rights to that card. It's great.

Opportunity.

How many senators have we just lost for being found in bed with defense contractors? At least two have had to step down from their positions in the last year. I haven't been counting, there may be ten.

MODERATOR—SO WE KNOW WHY THEY MAKE THEIR DECISIONS. YOU ARE SAYING THEY ARE LOOKING OUT FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS. OR THEY ARE LOOKING OUT FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE BACKING THEM UP AND SUPPORTING THEM. WHY ARE THERE NO CONSEQUENCES? WHY DID 96-98% OF THEM GET RE-ELECTED EVERY TIME, INCLUDING SOME WHO ARE UNDER INDICTMENT, AND STILL GET RE-ELECTED?

(many talking at once)

It's a voting issue, is what you are getting at.

Yeah. Most people they look at it, no matter who you vote for, you elect a politician so they don't care any more.

A lot of voter apathy. I don't know what the percentages are, but...they had a bigger turnout last time than ever maybe, but...

What's this guy going to do and what's this guy done? So how bad is that versus what he could do that would be worse. Let's keep him in because we know what he's doing. We don't know what this guy is doing.

MODERATOR-SO IT'S KIND OF THE DEVIL YOU KNOW?

Yeah.

And also any rules or internal structures that you have, people are very cautious about bringing the hammer down as far as ethics rules in congress because any one of them could perhaps be next. No one wants to rock the boat.

(many talking at once)

DeLay got pushed out and they almost held onto the point that he could keep his position in spite of being indicted. But he got pushed out and the next person that came in, we just don't know him as well.

MODERATOR—WHY ARE THINGS SO BAD?

There's been quite a few people that I've talked to ...they won't even vote.

The reality is when you step into the voting booth what choices do you have?

They all believe in the same thing, all of them.

It's the lesser of two evils, that's what you have to look at it as.

MODERATOR—AS YOU GUYS KNOW, PRESIDENT BUSH HAS BEEN IN THE WHITE HOUSE FOR A LITTLE MORE THAN FIVE YEARS NOW. REPUBLICANS HAVE HAD CONTROL OF CONGRESS FOR OVER TEN YEARS NOW, SO YOU'VE GOT A PRETTY LONG STRETCH OF TOTAL REPUBLICAN CONTROL IN WASHINGTON. DO YOU THINK REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP OVERALL HAS BEEN A SUCCESS OR A FAILURE?

I think there's a big backlash of people finally reading the writing on the wall.

(many talking at once)

May I say one thing? Did you see 60 Minutes four years ago with both Bush's? And they were in ENRON and it was all videotaped, the old man and Bush, and they've got their arms around each other. And ENRON says we thank you...this is when he was governor of Texas. And he says if you ever need anything, we are here for you and this is Bush telling the president of ENRON. You need anything, you let us know. Both of them were right there.

MODERATOR—BUT TO MY QUESTION...WHETHER OR NOT REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP IN WASHINGTON HAS BEEN A SUCCESS OR A FAILURE.

You can't call it a success I guess, obviously with what's going on.

Yeah.

President Clinton there ...he had a pretty good run with the economy and all that. In spite of his personal junk, I mean nothing major happened in his regime. There was no terrorism. He had a pretty easy presidency and the times were better. Yeah, I think the republicans have not done their job.

I think a failure.

Failure.

MODERATOR—IN WHAT SPECIFIC WAYS?

Well, I think he doesn't do much thinking or investigation before he does anything. He jumps first and then thinks about it. He gets his feet in the fire and it makes him aware of it. That seems to be what he's done.

I think when we had democrats and republicans at each other's throats in a relatively equal position, you'd have the democrats who weren't going for unions and education and liberal concerns and the republicans who were considered more religious and corporate conservative concerns, they would keep each other from going too far off the middle. With no balance, the republicans have been basically been able to push as far to their interest as they have chosen to. And the middle ground is where the country is best served.

That's true.

Checks and balances. Thinking back on Wall Street six years ago, and you watch the news every morning and you'd have Wall Street and the big TV screen and the numbers would keep going around and around, and at the end we didn't owe anybody anything. And then election time came around and they said, hey your democrats are tax and spend. Tax and spend for democrats. Well, where are we at? Taxes are up. You get killed in taxes all over the place. My real estate taxes are going down, but yet the taxes go up.

MODERATOR—HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE CURRENT CONGRESS AND ITS RECORD? WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

A team of wild horses with no one at the reins. They are going whatever way they want to.

I think you look at it now compared to our forefathers when they created it, and it's changed too much. I think we need to go back more that way. I'm a conservative person by nature.

Yeah, but do you think it can? Is it possible?

It doesn't seem possible right now.

There's too much corporate....the money is so concentrated at the top and I know it's always been that way. And my dad said it's always been that way. These guys at the top, they just make tremendous money versus the rest of the guys. And here we are struggling to keep a job. We go through corporate takeovers, we get laid off. Now you are an old son of a bitch and nobody wants you becauseI don't know. It really seems concentrated at the top.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT #3 IN THOSE PACKETS I GAVE YOU. WE'VE GOT A FEW WAYS WE COULD DESCRIBE SOME OF THE COMPLAINTS THAT FOLKS HAVE ABOUT IT. SO, READ THROUGH THE LIST AND PUT A CIRCLE AROUND THE TWO THAT YOU THINK BEST DESCRIBE THE CURRENT CONGRESS FOR YOU.

(end of side)

MODERATOR—LET'S JUST GET A SHOW OF HANDS HERE. DO NOTHING? 2. TOO PARTISAN? 2. WRONG PRIORITIES? 3. BEHOLDEN TO CORPORATE INTERESTS? 5. RUBBER STAMP? 2. FOR THE RICH? 2. CORRUPT? 3. YOU GUYS ARE PRETTY SPREAD OUT ON THIS. BEHOLDEN TO CORPORATE INTERESTS GOT THE MOST. WHY IS THAT A PROBLEM MORE THAN THE OTHERS?

They can't serve the constituents or do what we thought we elected them to do. They take these big political contributions to get elected with however many millions of dollars it takes. Ten to twenty million they spend to get elected, especially on the federal level. They obviously feel they owe the corporate interests back because they greased them so damn bad with all these contributions. And then the lobbyist thing too. Most of the lobbyists are previous congressional members and if they are not, they are all attorneys.

They work the loopholes, man.

I agree. Just the fact that the lobbyists have so much money to put into ...put so much money into it, they are not hearing anybody else. And my wife is going to get involved in the political end of it because she's in the position. And there's so much stuff going on, it's just killing them to death.

The insurance industry is killing them.

Yeah, she said that if we write our congressmen, if they receive like four to ten letters from constituents about something, they consider it a major thing. Just that many because they don't get enough. They are too inundated by the lobbyists giving them all their push that they don't see anything else.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT WRONG PRIORITIES?

Just they have to pick their priorities.

I think that's totally wrong in that case. And giving themselves a pay raise...healthcare has been a big issue and that really needs to be addressed. We are still a strong country. We still have the best healthcare around. Let's not kid ourselves.

If you can afford it.

That's true now. That's more the case now, if you can afford it now.

It's time for a national healthcare.

Or something along that line.

Europe has got a couple good plans in a few countries.

(many talking at once)

They need to work on important things. When the courts decide something, why should they step in and intervene?

That's like talking about Bush having a lot of people executed in Texas. That's true, but the courts and the jury found them guilty. And so, he let justice be carried out.

MODERATOR—I DON'T WANT TO GO INTO THAT. CORRUPT, THREE OF YOU PICKED THAT ONE AS WELL. WHY DID YOU PICK THAT ONE?

I think the corrupt and beholden kind of go hand in hand.

I thought rich and corporate were pretty much the same.

That's true.

But the problem with the corporation is, it's an organism to itself that will defend itself to the disinterest of its members. A corporation will make money and shed jobs.

Exactly.

Ship them to China and India.

How many times has ...when you are lucky enough to get a person instead of a phone mate or a recording, and they don't speak....they are in India, these customer service reps.

MODERATOR—THERE'S GOING TO BE ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER FOR CONGRESS.

It's not that far off.

MODERATOR—FOR YOU PERSONALLY, WHAT'S THE ELECTION ABOUT? WHAT'S GOING TO DETERMINE YOUR VOTE? WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT YOU CARE ABOUT?

For me it's partly healthcare. That's going to directly affect me.

Foreign policy is going to have to change too. Where we do business, not with the other countries, it's going to have to change. Especially after this port affair, people aren't just going to stand back and let him do it. And keep running business the same way, it's not going to happen.

I think anyone who is antagonistic to the status quo is going to get my interest at this point. If nothing else, I'll enjoy being the one of a dozen people voting for him instead of the guy who has the money.

Healthcare and jobs. Our own economy...I mean...instead ofI know we need a strong military and everything, but I think Iraq has got to end and we've got to generate more jobs here in the states. And everything goes to frigging Mexico or China or India. And healthcare is a big blight. A lot of us grew up in the olden days when we had free healthcare.

The governor and some city council members, I think last week or the week before, they went to China or Europe trying to sell Ohio goods over there, which was a good thing. And look at DeWinne, I can't see anyone beating him. I look at who is going against him and he hasn't done enough bad to be defeated, I think.

(many talking at once)

I thought he tried to drum up students going to college here at Ohio State and other Ohio colleges.

(many talking at once)

MODERATOR—WHAT IS GOING TO DRIVE YOUR VOTE? OTHER CONCERNS?

I think for me it's basically going to be on domestic issues.

MODERATOR—ANY PARTICULAR ONES?

Yeah, try to make things a little better here than they are. Not drag us down more.

To be honest, I just vote ...my dad used to get a democrat in a position just to keep the balance of power. We've pushed so far to one side, I don't think we'd do any better if we were all pushed to the left. I'm sure we'd find a way to screw things up that way too. A two-party system seems to keep us all from doing our worst.

MODERATOR—OBVIOUSLY HOW YOU DO ULTIMATELY VOTE WILL BE IN LARGE PART DETERMINED BY THE INDIVIDUALS. YOU LOOK AT THE PEOPLE, NOT JUST THE PARTY TAGS. I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO THEY ARE GOING TO BE AT THE CONGRESSIONAL LEVEL AND STUFF. I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE PARTIES, ABOUT DEMOCRATS, ABOUT REPUBLICANS, THEIR DIFFERENCES AND THEN THERE'S ALSO A LOT OF THINGS THAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON. I WANT TO TALK ABOUT YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF THE PARTIES. LET'S START WITH REPUBLICANS. REGARDLESS OF WHICH WAY YOU MIGHT LEAN IN VOTING, WHAT IS THE BEST REASON TO VOTE REPUBLICAN FOR CONGRESS?

They tend to be fiscal conservatives. Let's put it this way, they tend to be fiscal conservatives, at least openly. In the case when money is tight and all....we've got some excess money, maybe we'll have a liberal who will vote for like Social Security, healthcare.

Well, if you want a strong foreign policy and you want lower taxes, there are two right off the top of my head.

Lower taxes for who though?

Right across the board.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE? OTHER POSITIVE REASONS TO VOTE FOR REPUBLICANS? OKAY, FLIP TO HANDOUT #4. HERE ARE FOUR CONTRASTS WHY THE REPUBLICANS SAY THEY ARE THE RIGHT CHOICE, THE DEMOCRATS ARE THE WRONG CHOICE FOR THIS COUNTRY. READ THEM AND PICK THE ONE THAT YOU THINK IS THE MOST CONVINCING.

Who wrote these?

(many talking at once)

Can we put none of the above?

MODERATOR—YOU’VE GOT TO PICK ONE. HOW MANY PICKED A? B? 2. C? 2. D? 5. SO, LET’S TALK ABOUT THE LAST ONE. DEMOCRATS REJECT THE ROLE OF FAITH IN OUR PUBLIC LIFE AND TAKE A PERMISSIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS CRIME, SEX AND OTHER ISSUES, SENDING THE WRONG MESSAGE TO OUR CHILDREN. REPUBLICANS FIGHT TO PROTECT THE SANCTITY OF THE FAMILY AND THE CHRISTIAN VALUES THAT ARE THE MORAL FOUNDATION OF OUR COUNTRY. WHAT DOES THAT ONE SAY TO YOU?

Putting aside Kennedy and all that stuff, I don’t really see a battleground there between republicans and democrats in that respect. I think we are really tearing down something that...I think everybody has a moral....to me, it’s up to the issue....the way the statement is. It bugs me. It really does.

Same as him. Clinton’s name isn’t down here, Bush’s name isn’t down here, so I could go that way, but....

The statement is too....

I’ve got a problem with basically them saying that...the republicans that is what they used to stand for, and basically what they are doing today. Meaning, if it quacks and it looks like a duck, then it must be a duck. You say one thing, but yet you do another. That’s the way this party has been going.

I think that’s the backbone of our country. And once you start pecking away at that, then I think we will be in trouble. Look at Raman and all the other great civilizations of all time, they fell from within and I think this is a part of that.

MODERATOR—WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN PEOPLE TALK ABOUT CHRISTIAN VALUES?

Well, let’s look at what our country was founded upon, our forefathers. It’s right there, all summed up.

MODERATOR—WHAT IS IT?

It’s what you are as a person. It’s not like you go out...like a lot of people go out there...if I can get away with it, it’s okay. But you shouldn’t try to be like that kind of a person. You should be more moral, just...everyday you should try to be a better person than you were yesterday.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU?

Yeah, you are supposed to do the right thing. Just like going to church or however your parents raised you. Do the right thing and nobody can seem to do that anymore.

(many talking at once)

Trust and doing the right thing, believing in God, whoever that may be. But doing the right thing and nobody can do that.

MODERATOR—SO IT'S KIND OF LIKE PERSONAL INTEGRITY TO YOU?

Right.

MODERATOR—TO YOU IT MEANS PERSONAL INTEGRITY?

Well, honesty.

Yeah, honesty.

It's like if you go buy something, you expect it...if you buy a pen, you expect the damn thing to work. If you buy a lighter for your cigar or cigarette, when you flick that Bic, you expect it to work. And when they don't....even if the thing was only a buck, it's like you want to wring somebody's neck.

The big thing I have is that they talk about republicans trying to protect Christian values. The founding fathers were not necessary Christian, but a lot were (inaudible). They believed in God, but not necessarily talking...they came from a country, England, that had an official state religion that controlled aspects of everyone's life.

That's why they came here.

Exactly. And the idea was just say, Christian values would have been abhorrent to them because that would be exclusive. So, to say that we are supporting the backbone of our country, one of the first amendments was freedom of religion. Though not necessarily freedom from religion. So, when they talk about the sanctity of the family, there's a remark that Mrs. Quayle made about Dan Quayle talking about fighting for the family, but she basically raised her kids as a single mother because he spent all his time politicking. The family values and the Christian values are something that they hold up and they talk about, but it's not executed. And it shows that it's both exclusionary and hypocritical.

MODERATOR—DO YOU AGREE THAT THERE ARE KIND OF CORE VALUES THAT OUR COUNTRY WAS FOUNDED ON?

Oh yeah.

Yes, absolutely.

MODERATOR—AND THOSE ARE THE VALUES OF PERSONAL INTEGRITY YOU TALKED ABOUT. WHAT OTHER VALUES ARE THEY?

You can say a lot of things.

Trust, honor.

How did business get conducted two hundred years ago? A handshake. A man said, okay, I'll do this for you. Fine. Okay, boom, it was done. Instead now, you've got like contracts you've got to go through. And somewhere in there, there is a loophole for the other person to get out of.

Like Charlie said, he has his own business. He came over and if I was a good, honest person we would have this verbal agreement and we wouldn't need no contract. But the way people are now, if he came over and someone got hurt, he could try to sue me. Or if he don't do something right, I'd try to sue him. That's the way people are. It's legal. Really, it's wrong.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO GET AT ONE POINT BEFORE WE MOVE ON FROM THIS ABOUT THE VALUE STUFF. IN THE LAST ELECTION AND IN A LOT OF ELECTIONS NOW, PEOPLE TALK ABOUT VALUES IN TERMS OF GAY MARRIAGE, ABORTION, SOME OF THOSE ISSUES. DOES THAT MEAN THE SAME THING?

I don't think so.

No.

MODERATOR—WHY NOT?

This country was founded on freedom. It's one of the big things. And when you start going against all your freedoms, you've got nothing left.

Then you exclude people.

There's been gays from way back before B.C.

Right.

Does anybody have any idea if values and so forth through the 1800's and the French Revolution...if you check your history, what basically was happening? The people were starving and so forth. But yet the super wealthy could care less about their people.

They were trying to get rid of a tyrant. The Bastille thing.

Something like hang the warriors.

MODERATOR—LET'S TALK ABOUT THESE OTHER ONES THAT DIDN'T GET AS MANY VOTES HERE. DEMOCRATS OPPOSE REPUBLICAN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE OUR ECONOMY, LOWER HEALTHCARE COSTS AND DEFEND OUR COUNTRY, WHILE OFFERING NO SOLUTIONS OF THEIR OWN. REPUBLICANS AREN'T AFRAID TO TACKLE THESE BIG CHALLENGES AND WILL WORK WITH PRESIDENT BUSH TO ADDRESS OUR COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT ONE?

They haven't done it so far.

And every time they do try to work, they show themselves to be working hard for a program, there seems to be something in it for somebody.

Exactly. All during the election against Kerry, he came up with all these wonderful ideas, but how are you going to do that? And you just kind of go, well do it. I don't know. Where are you going to get the money from for it? We'll find it or we'll get it.

(many talking at once)

MODERATOR—DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FIRST PART THAT THE DEMOCRATS ARE BASICALLY JUST OPPOSING REPUBLICAN EFFORTS, BUT DON'T HAVE IDEAS OF THEIR OWN?

They do, but they are not saying them, that's their problem.

They have ideas, but they usually get hammered.

Because they are the minority.

I think then it goes back to one of the other questions of the power struggle, partisan and non-partisan. They are saying they come up with all the ideas and we didn't...and we let them go with their things and we are just giving them all the power. We have to oppose them.

MODERATOR—WHAT ABOUT THE DEMOCRATS ARE TRYING TO RAISE TAXES AS THEIR SOLUTION TO EVERY PROBLEM IS TO INCREASE SPENDING AND MORE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS. THE REPUBLICANS HAVE LOWERED TAXES AND INTRODUCED NEW IDEAS ON HEALTHCARE AND RETIREMENT SAVINGS TO LOWER COSTS AND GIVE INDIVIDUALS MORE CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN MONEY.

That's a crap.

The last statement with the retirement savings and giving individuals more control of their own money, it's a way to cause a collapse of a system where the people who are working now are paying for the people who are retired now. And if you say you people

who are working now, you can put your money into these nice accounts, it bankrupts those people who have been working all their lives to support the previous generation. And again, there's been indications that there is some money involved in a sudden outgrowth of a gigantic retirement funding industry that could arise from this.

Well, we are talking about Social Security now. And Social Security has only gotten...

MODERATOR—I DON'T WANT TO GO INTO THE WHOLE SOCIAL SECURITY THING. I WANT TO STAY FOCUSED ON THIS IDEA THAT THE DEMOCRATS ARE JUST GOING TO RAISE TAXES, REPUBLICANS HAVE LOWERED TAXES AND THEY HAVE NEW IDEAS.

How do we fund it?

Borrow money from our communist countries.

And have our kids pay it.

A lot of the programs are being cut. But you stop to think, where did the money from those programs come from? It comes from taxes. So, are you benefiting anyone? You cut the taxes and you might get \$5 or \$600 a year. That's a dollar a day. But when some kid can't eat...when some kid is raised as a second-class citizen and he finds the only way he can make a living is with a gun, that's...

MODERATOR—WHAT ABOUT THE TOP ONE? DEMOCRATS HAVE OPPOSED THE PATRIOT ACT AND FUNDING FOR OUR TROOPS, PROVING THEY ARE TOO WEAK AND INDECISIVE TO DEFEND OUR COUNTRY. AND REPUBLICANS HAVE SUPPORTED PRESIDENT BUSH AND CAN BE TRUSTED TO ALWAYS PUT AMERICA'S SECURITY FIRST.

I don't think that's a fair statement.

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK THAT OUR COUNTRY WOULD BE AS SAFE OR SAFER UNDER DEMOCRATIC CONTROL AS IT IS UNDER REPUBLICAN CONTROL?

With who they have picked out for the election, I don't think so. I think Bush was the right choice.

MODERATOR—WELL, I'M TALKING ABOUT CONGRESS.

Okay, I'm sorry.

I think we'd be safe with a democratic controlled congress. We were for years before.

About the last ten.

I agree with him. I think it would take longer to get things done though.

MODERATOR—LET’S LOOK AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LEDGER, THE DEMOCRATS. FLIP TO HANDOUT #5. AGAIN, REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU PLAN TO VOTE, WHAT’S THE BEST REASON TO VOTE FOR A DEMOCRAT FOR CONGRESS?

It seems to me that the democrats are more for the working guys and generally the republicans are stronger militarily, but they are corporate men. More big business, I believe.

MODERATOR—OKAY. OTHER REASONS WHY DEMOCRATS MIGHT BE A BETTER FIT FOR THE COUNTRY RIGHT NOW?

You might get a healthcare system, national healthcare that might help us all.

I was just thinking that we haven’t seen the worst...our healthcare is probably going to get a lot worse yet before it gets fixed. And I’m going to be very, very liberal here. This is a worldwide problem that will concentrate incredible riches in the hands of a few. I think we generate a vast population of desperate poor. And the desperate poor are the ones that go to the (inaudible) training camps or the Palestinians with the suicide bombs. The people coming over are (inaudible), the people in our inner cities that can’t read. If we can’t equalize and find a way to help them out, they’ll help themselves out.

MODERATOR—ALRIGHT, LET’S FLIP TO HANDOUT #5 AND SEE WHAT THE DEMOCRATS HAVE TO SAY TO MAKE THEIR CASE. AGAIN, SAME FORMAT, CIRCLE THE ONE THAT MAKES THE BEST CASE TO VOTE FOR A DEMOCRAT FOR CONGRESS. HOW MANY PICKED A? 2. B? 1. C? 2. D? E? 4. DID SOMEBODY NOT VOTE?

Uh-hum.

MODERATOR—LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU GET DONE.

I can’t agree with any of these things.

MODERATOR-AGAIN, YOU DON’T HAVE TO COMMIT TO ANY OF THEM, BUT WHICH ONE MAKES THE BEST CASE FOR WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE DEMOCRAT?

Let’s see here....I think it would be C. That’s probably the one I agree with most.

MODERATOR—ALRIGHT, LET’S TALK ABOUT E FIRST. WITH KATRINA, IRAQ AND ALLOWING FOREIGN COUNTRIES TO CONTROL OUR PORTS, THE ENERGY CRISIS AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, REPUBLICANS HAVE FAILED

AT HANDLING THE ISSUES FACING OUR COUNTRY. DEMOCRATS WILL OFFER REAL LEADERSHIP, MAKING SECURITY HERE AT HOME A TOP PRIORITY, EXPANDING AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE TO ALL AMERICANS AND INVESTING IN RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGIES TO MAKE OUR COUNTRY ENERGY INDEPENDENT BY 2020. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT ONE?

Sounds good to me.

It would be great if it could happen.

MODERATOR—IS IT BELIEVABLE?

(many talking at once)

That's a tall order.

It's not going to happen.

You are talking about four years.

I hope so, I wish we could.

That and the leadership part. Democrats are nice, but hey are not very cohesive.

Just in research and technologies alone, you can't do much in four years.

MODERATOR—WELL IT'S 2020, THAT'S FOURTEEN YEARS.

But I meantypically they only go into office four years at a time. So I mean you can't count on anybody being there for two terms to try and get anything accomplished.

MODERATOR—WELL, AGAIN, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT CONGRESS HERE.

(many talking at once)

With all the technologies and stuff like that, you can't develop anything in that short a time.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK OF THIS ONE?

I agree with it.

I think that's what we've been trying to do.

It would be a great goal.

I just look at it a that would be the lovely one at the end of the rainbow that I'd ride my unicorn to. It's just too much against the machinery to hope for.

It sounded good to me. It's just that it seems like all these things we've been dragging our feet on. And it seems like they are spending a lot more time on vacation than I am. And not doing as much while they are there.

MODERATOR—OKAY. OTHER THOUGHTS ON THIS ONE?

I think both parties are trying to achieve that.

MODERATOR—DO YOU AGREE WITH THE BEGINNING PART WHERE IT BASICALLY SAYS REPUBLICANS HAVE BEEN IN CONTROL AND THEY'VE JUST FAILED?

Right.

You just can't guarantee that they'll do any better if we were to put democrats in control of the whole machine.

MODERATOR—ALRIGHT, LET'S TALK ABOUT C, THE HEALTHCARE ONE. WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ON THAT ONE?

Thank God.

MODERATOR—IS THAT A COMPELLING ENOUGH REASON TO VOTE DEMOCRATIC?

It's more than what we've got now.

It seems like most times when I watch TV, it seems like that's like one of their number one priorities. And I think the republicans have put this particular issue more on a back burner. It's not as much a priority.

The Clintons and their congress tried and failed on this one horribly. So, it's not likely that they'll...in less than ten years, be able to pull together enough capital to try it again.

Everybody sees this every week on their check or every two weeks. We see it every year, every week, whatever.

It may not be the best reason, but I thought it was the one thing here that seemed like it could actually happen.

MODERATOR—IF YOU HEARD SOMEBODY SAY THIS, YOU MIGHT HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT THEY COULD DO IT?

Compared to all the rest of them, yes.

It seemed like the most realistic thing that could happen.

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK DEMOCRATS CAN REFORM THE CURRENT HEALTHCARE SYSTEM TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE COVERAGE TO ALL AMERICANS?

It's got to be better than where we've been the last eight or ten years.

You may as well give them a chance.

Get off of that one third against two thirds. The one third is going to lose every time.

MODERATOR—LET'S GO TO THE TOP ONE, HEALTHCARE AND ENERGY ...DEMOCRATS WILL BRING REAL CHANGE....NO COMMERCIAL PAY RAISES WITHOUT A BALANCED BUDGET. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT ONE?

I looked at that as at least two small mechanisms that republicans have fallen down on so badly and so visibly. The democrats could promise that because even the republicans go along with most of that.

Even if the democrats fail horribly, I think they'll be miles ahead of what we've seen the last few years with the lobbyists and...

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK DEMOCRATS WILL BRING A REAL CHANGE TO WASHINGTON?

Any change is a real change.

I don't think you can flip it 180. It's not going to be a light switch like that, but they could put in new mechanisms.

Yeah.

Right now there's so much going on that what are you looking at for real change? I mean, you know, five percent, ten percent would be a real change versus like he said a 180. We are not going to flip that. That would take twenty or thirty years to do that. To get things in the right direction, that's a possibility.

MODERATOR—LET ME ASK ABOUT D, NONE OF YOU PICKED THAT ONE. REPUBLICANS HAVE GIVEN AWAY BILLIONS TO THE WEALTHY CORPORATE INTERESTS, LEAVING AVERAGE AMERICANS WITH RECORD DEFICITS AND A WEAKENED ECONOMY. DEMOCRATS WILL REFORM OUR

TAX CODE TO ENSURE EVERYONE PAYS THEIR FAIR SHARE AND PROVIDE TAX BREAKS TO COMPANIES THAT INVEST IN AMERICAN JOBS AND TECHNOLOGY.

To be honest, I don't think even the democrats understand the tax code. No one understands the tax code.

That's a fair statement. I have to think that there's...for as many....republicans that are running companies and everything else, there's got to be as many democrats doing the same thing. So, you are taking a hit in your own pocket. You are not going to do that.

No.

You are not going to take money out of your pocket. If that's the case, why haven't you done it before? And why don't you...there are so many different places you can donate your money to that's going to help, why haven't you done that rather than worry about the other things?

These big corporations now put so much of their workforce in other countries, they are not going to spend the money to bring it back here. You'd have to give them ...the tax credits would have to be outstanding to get them to bring their labor back here.

I was just talking to a friend of mine and he worked at Scott's Lawn Care or whatever. He worked in the IT department, which they outsourced almost completely to India. That was about a year ago. They are bringing them back because that failed for them. So now they are bringing it back to the United States because it didn't work. So, I think what's happening is that people find out that it wasn't as good an idea as we thought.

MODERATOR—ONE ISSUE THAT CAME UP FROM BOTH PARTIES THAT WE TALKED ABOUT A LOT AND THAT'S HEALTHCARE. OBVIOUSLY IT'S A HUGE ISSUE FOR YOU GUYS. REPUBLICANS SAY THEY'VE GOT NEW IDEAS, DEMOCRATS HAVE THEIR MESSAGE, AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE FOR ALL AMERICANS. PRESIDENT BUSH IN HIS STATE OF THE UNION PROPOSED SOMETHING CALLED THE HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS. BASICALLY THEY ALLOW INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR EMPLOYERS TO MAKE TAX-FREE CONTRIBUTIONS TO AN ACCOUNT FOR WHICH YOU WOULD THEN PAY OUT OF POCKET HEALTH EXPENSES. THESE ARE HIGH DEDUCTIBLE PLANS AND THE INSURANCE PART KICKS IN FOR CATASTROPHIC CARE ONLY. YOUR DEDUCTIBLE IS \$4 OR \$5,000 A YEAR. AND YOU PAY OUT OF THIS HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNT FOR ALL OF THOSE OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES UNTIL YOU GET ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP AND THEN YOUR INSURANCE WOULD COVER THE REST. SUPPORTERS OF THIS SAY THAT THESE POLICIES WILL LOWER COSTS, INCREASE COMPETITION BY GIVING INDIVIDUALS THE INCENTIVE TO SHOP AROUND FOR LOWER PRICES, TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN DOCTORS AND TO MAKE THE FINAL DECISION ON THE TYPE OF CARE THAT THEY WANT AND NEED. SO,

TO MAKE YOU A MORE INFORMED CONSUMER AND CREATE MORE ACCOUNTABILITY AND MORE LOWER PRICES THAT WAY. WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THAT? DO YOU THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA, BAD IDEA?

We are under it with the schools. It's very confusing. I went to six meetings to try to understand it. And I still don't understand the darn thing. It's very confusing.

The health savings accounts, basically, it's a way to save your own money. It's a 401K against medical disaster. It's not really resolving the medical coverage issue. And this nonsense about shopping around for the cheapest coverage, I work in a large corporation, you get what the corporation has chosen for this year. You have a choice of the cheap plan, the juicy plan or the elite plan. But it's all from whatever the corporation has chosen for you. So this shopping around is....

I think it's a great thing if you are like 18 or in your 20's because you don't need much healthcare then. And that money will just keep building up and building up and you'll theoretically...it's unproven...and when you get to be older, it will make all your premiums and pay all your costs and it will still be growing. I think it's a great idea theoretically.

You are going to have to have a damn big salary to start off with and save for a long time. If you've been to the hospital lately, you know what it costs you to go.

Yeah, I went to the hospital and I had two bills for \$30,000 last year.

(many talking at once)

But what I'm saying if a young man could build this thing up, we can't start it at our age.

Yeah, but then you almost died again when they took 18 inches of bowel out.

MODERATOR—ALRIGHT, FLIP TO HANDOUT #6 AND YOU'LL SEE SOME OF THE DOUBTS THAT PEOPLE HAVE RAISED ABOUT THESE HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS. AGAIN, READ THROUGH THE LIST AND PICK THE TWO THAT YOU FIND ARE THE MOST CONVINCING ARGUMENTS. HOW MANY PICKED A? 4. B? 1. C? 4. D? 1. E? 1. F? 1. G? 6. SO G, JUST LIKE SOCIAL SECURITY AND THE NEW MEDICARE DRUG PLAN, HSA'S WOULD FORCE AMERICANS TO ASSUME FULL LIABILITY FOR THEIR MEDICAL CARE. WHY DID YOU PICK THAT ONE?

It's true.

That's a good reason.

It's like most anything. Putting it in lawyer's terms, who would understand it? How is this plan going to help me or that plan? And if there's nobody there to tell me, you are just kind of picking in the dark.

Well, if we are going to talk about a government program executed with the same brilliance and efficiency as the Medicare drug plan...the pharmacists hate it. The patients hate it, the doctors hate it, everyone hates it, except the pharmaceutical houses.

I just think that people aren't going to be explained to where they understand it fully to make the right decisions.

MODERATOR—AND HOW ABOUT A, DOES NOTHING TO ADDRESS THE REAL SITUATION?

Exactly. As I first said, it's a bank account against your disasters. But it has nothing to do with the vast amount of money being put into selling and sampling drugs as opposed to what it actually costs to manufacture them. The malpractice problems that are shooting the costs through the roof...

MODERATOR—IS IT FAIR TO SAY THAT IF ANY SOLUTION TO THE HEALTHCARE CRISIS DOESN'T INVOLVE CONTROLLING COSTS AND LOWERING COSTS, IT'S NOT ULTIMATELY GOING TO BE THE SOLUTION?

Exactly.

This is just a shift onto the backs of the poor working guy. They are going to have to beat a hell of a deductible before it kicks in anyway.

I kind of got one question though. How can this government justify people going to Canada and buying the same drugs a lot cheaper? They turn around and pass a law and make it illegal. So now you are a crook to save a buck. Now, tell me that ain't greed.

We have a lot of pharmaceuticals that...

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT #7 AND WE ARE NOT GOING TO TALK ABOUT THIS. BUT, GIVEN EVERYTHING WE'VE TALKED ABOUT, THE DEMOCRATS AND THE REPUBLICANS, IF THE ELECTION WERE HELD TODAY, WHICH WAY WOULD YOU BE LEANING? ZERO, STRAIGHT DEAD IN THE MIDDLE, ONE OR TWO YOU ARE LEANING IN ONE DIRECTION OR THE OTHER, THREE OR FOUR OR FIVE, YOU ARE PRETTY STRONGLY GOING IN ONE DIRECTION OR THE OTHER. JUST TELL ME WHERE ON THIS SCALE YOU WOULD BE IF THE ELECTION WERE HELD TODAY AND BELOW THAT, TELL ME WHY.

MODERATOR—THANKS FOR COMING...

(end of session)