

**DEMOCRACY CORPS
GROUP 4
SEATTLE, WA
COLLEGE MEN, 32-49
INCOME OVER \$50,000
AUGUST 21, 2001**

MODERATOR—(INTRODUCTION)

I'm Shawn. I work for Pepsi. I help sell soda basically, and I'm from the area out here. And my hobby is playing golf generally.

I'm Greg. I work for a company that works in information technology for the air transport industry based in Geneva, Switzerland. Family . . . two little girls, and I like to golf a lot also.

I'll have to keep up with you. My name's Scott. And I used to work for . . . now the Internet company, and I also work in the wireless and the software development. We're an Internet company (inaudible). I'm married and two little girls. And my hobby is improving actually of late.

I'm David . . . I work for Artics Ingenents, and that's a German-based company that makes special pulverized cement systems. I'm Sales Manager and also Technical Director for this area in the Northwest and Western Canada. And I go down to Mexico and do some work down there for them as well. My hobbies are to try to stay away from golf. I get roped into it at bachelor parties and that's about it. I windsurf and ski and like to go on vacations.

My name's Carl. I work for a medical equipment manufacturer in the area. I have two boys and my hobbies are my two boys. They keep me busy enough. And I have (inaudible).

MODERATOR—YOU DO? WOW, YOU'RE A RARE BREED.

Yes. Not only have I been there but I admit to it.

Is that where all the credit card companies are based?

There's a lot of them in there.

Hi, my name's Tim and I work for Cosco. I'm in the small appliances department, buy posters, razors and that type of thing. My hobbies are hiking and mountain bike riding. I have two kids, a boy and a girl.

My name is Tim. I also work for a medical device company in the area. Got a wife and a daughter. And pretty much softball, volleyball, sports kind of things.

I'm Dave. I'm an accountant. For hobbies I motorcycle and chase women. I'm single.

I'm Jim. I'm originally from Atlanta. I work for Microsoft. I'm single now, and for fun I'm a musician. I sing and songwrite.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU DO?

A singer and songwriter. (Inaudible) guitar keys.

My name is Denny and I'm married. I have a three-year-old and a six-month-old at home and I just moved up here . . . well actually it's been more years than I realized, about five years ago from Portland, where I was there for twenty years, and I'm in the entertainment business. I produce concerts and I represent artists for corporate fairs and casinos.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, VERY NICE. LET'S START OFF JUST THINKING REAL GENERALLY ABOUT THE COUNTRY, THINGS THAT ARE GOING ON IN THE COUNTRY TODAY. IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE, WOULD YOU SAY THINGS ARE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION OR THE WRONG DIRECTION?

Wrong direction.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU, RIGHT OR WRONG?

I think it's going in no direction.

MODERATOR—WELL OBVIOUSLY, YOU'VE GOTTA CHOOSE ONE, RIGHT OR WRONG?

I'd probably say right, just 'cause I can't think of anything that's really wrong with the way it's going, so it's the better of the two.

I think it's going right.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY. WHAT THINGS ARE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION? LET'S START THERE.

Getting \$600.00 back from W.

Yeah.

I guess that was nice about it.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE IS GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION?

I'd say tax reform.

Defense, increased awareness of what's going on out there and doing some things about our missile defense system and trying to get the other countries to go along with it.

I think we're going in a better direction.

MODERATOR—WHY?

I think there's a little bit of a new tone in attitudes of people. I really don't think there's as much apathy out there as maybe there is talked about in the media, but I actually hear more people talking about politics lately than I have in a long time, and I gauge that as a very good direction, an improvement, more (inaudible), better than the last . . . I hear more lately, more talking.

MODERATOR—OKAY. WHAT KIND OF THINGS ARE GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION?

To start off, our energy policy, looking for and exploring in the Alaskan wilderness. I have a problem with that. We do have an energy problem, we all know 'cause our rates have increased. California says it's increased (inaudible). I'd say that's one of the things that's going in the negative direction.

Traffic.

I have 600,000 dollar toilets that we're trying to put into (inaudible).

There you go.

I think just from an overall . . . now looking at the economy from an unemployment side, and I've been looking at it for a long time being in the Internet world, but the high-tech sector two years ago was just skyrocketing. I think at that point you might say that nationally, the economy was going in a positive direction, and I think, you know, last year with a downturn of the stock market in the tech sector, going down very dramatically, people losing millions of dollars all across the country in their investments, 401K's and passport portfolios and unemployment rates now are higher than they've been in . . . well, I'm not sure, two, three years. But just, you know, you're reading about the layoffs in big companies, companies going out of business at rates that we've never seen. That's kind of what I see as going in the wrong direction.

MODERATOR—OKAY. ANYTHING ELSE GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION?

It seems to me that (inaudible) seem to be increasing rather than decreasing with time. It just seems like every time I hear something when the election day comes around, it's always motivated about passing laws, but they're never getting rid of the ones that don't work. So it's always not implementing new ones, it's stacking more on top of the other ones. That's the biggest thing I guess I see. Just it seems to be human in fact.

MODERATOR—OKAY, LET'S SWITCH GEARS A LITTLE BIT HERE . . . "AL GORE"?

Stiff.

Psychologically unstable.

MODERATOR—WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?

He's flip-flopped on every issue he's ever held. He's never shown a conviction to any one thing through the course of his political career. And there's not one issue he's been consistent on, ever. I don't think he has any core belief, and I look at that as a psychopathic tendency.

Liar.

(Inaudible) Policy.

I would say, I didn't see a lot of leadership qualities. It's kind of hard to nail down, but as to (inaudible), but I didn't see leadership there.

The first thing that comes to my mind is wishy-washy.

Yeah.

And what makes me think of that was the presidential debates last year. There were three of them, and in each of the three, it was so obvious, or it was to me anyway, that he was trying to take a different . . . take a spin, you know, and make himself into something that would look good. You know, he'd just put . . .

He's trying to pull a Clinton.

Yeah.

MODERATOR—OKAY, HOW ABOUT “BILLY GRAHAM”?

Cries a lot.

Old person.

Well, (inaudible) tend to be real kind to him. The negatives of him have worn off as he's gotten older. People are giving him I think a softer, father-type image these days.

I was thinking of steadfast. I mean it just seems like since I can remember, that guy's always been around. I mean no matter what happens, he's just always there.

He was there when my grandmother was born.

I guess respected. It's just that it seems like his opinion's respected by a lot of people.

Religious Right.

In my opinion, in his later years he's become a lot more liberal, so the criticism of him goes.

Yeah, I don't associate Billy Graham with the religious right for some reason.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT SOMEONE A LITTLE DIFFERENT, “ALLEN IVERSON”?

Good basketball player.

New breed basketball player.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

I guess to me the traditional basketball player, [Barry O'Neil], but the emblem of the NBA through the traditional basketball player, and then you compare Allen Iverson to him, and it's, you know, through the 2000 NBA, it's just totally out there.

I think he's being ingenuous. I almost liked him before, he was acting like a normal punk, because he was at least being who he was. Now it's like he's been corporately molded because he's a super . . . megasuper star. And you watched his transformation happen this year during the finals. I mean, I think his PR press people really molded him and handled him beautifully. He came across great, if that's what you want to try to make the image a little better on him, except that I don't buy it.

NBA's Puffy Combs.

There you go!

MODERATOR—OKAY, HOW ABOUT “BILL GATES”?

Self-starter.

Very bright guy.

He made some good decisions.

I think of 'ruthless' with Gates. I mean, I'm on the sales side of things, I think of the monetary aspects of what he's done, and it's just been really effective.

That's really what he did, you know, he took somebody else's idea and marketed it and profited with it, and he continues to profit off that same idea for over twenty-five years.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT “JOHN MCCAIN”?

I have a lot of respect for the guy. I don't know if I agree a hundred percent of what it is, but I think what he's been doing and what he's done for the country, and he's got some good opinions and he stands up for himself. So I can respect that.

I respect where he's coming from, but I don't agree with a lot of what he says.

How he says it.

Yeah!

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY “HOW HE SAYS IT”?

There's certain ways of saying something. He always tends to pick a different route of what you're really expected and kind of closes a lot of doors to voters or whoever it is. So it's a little like, this guy's a fanatic, we're not gonna listen to him anymore, where he could have a great message, but he just doesn't know how to present it to you. He's gotta present it some way.

He struck me as needless competition.

Yes.

He's definitely not wishy-washy.

He stands up for who he is.

Yeah, he stands up for his convictions, in that way he's the opposite as far as Al Gore's concerned. He's a straight shooter, I was gonna say tact-wise, he's not the politically molded kind of guy that Al Gore kind of is. A lot of handlers and . . .

I think he's a dangerous liberal, because he masquerades as a quasi-conservative, as a Republican, but I think he's more dangerous in that capacity than even the most wild liberal like Hillary Clinton.

MODERATOR—OKAY. ALL RIGHT, “BILL CLINTON”? FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND, “BILL CLINTON”?

He gets the women.

Song and dance.

Liar.

Right particular.

Excellent political speaker.

Quintessential politician.

The perfect politician. To me, that's what I think of when I think of Bill Clinton, the perfect politician. Not the perfect statesman, or the perfect legislator or perfect law maker, but the perfect politician.

MODERATOR—DO YOU MEAN TYPICAL OR DO YOU MEAN PERFECT?

No, perfect in that he plays the game of politics to perfection.

Works the system.

Right.

I draw a distinction between being a statesman and being a politician.

MODERATOR—OKAY. LET'S KEEP MOVING. NEXT I'M GONNA READ YOU A NUMBER OF STATEMENTS, JUST ABOUT LIFE IN THIS COUNTRY, AND I WANNA KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF. JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK AND WHY. THE FIRST ONE:

BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS CREATE WEALTH AND PROSPERITY IN OUR COUNTRY. GOVERNMENT SHOULD GET OUT OF THE WAY AND LET THEM DO THEIR JOB.

I'd agree with that. I think . . . I take sort of a free market view of things. Like to sort of maintain a free market and the less (inaudible) of business the more, the better off we are.

I would say more . . . government should more guide, not control, you know, what the free market presence where it needs to be. But when you have . . . keep it free market rather than the market's gone, we're gonna (inaudible).

Yeah, but if you think about what you said . . .

Microsoft is a great example of . . . there was nothing there, and Bill Gates created this, and prosperity in this whole area is owed to Microsoft. And where the government needs to be involved is providing some overview . . . these are the guidelines that you work with, but beyond that, yeah, stay out of the way, free market.

I already believe the whole country's renaissanced.

This is something brand new, it's never happened yet.

I would agree with your statement though, just whole-heartedly.

MODERATOR—OKAY. NEXT STATEMENT.

THERE ARE SOME BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD MEET. SCHOOLS WITH HIGH STANDARDS, AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE AND A RETIREMENT SYSTEM THAT'S SECURE.

I think you need to add 'protect the law enforcement aspect of it,' and from other countries coming in and being so . . .

I'd agree with the schools, I don't agree with the retirement piece. I think that's up to the individual. I think that it's definitely not the best interest of the society to help save us from ourselves to a degree, like give us the option that, I like to have enforcement.

Yeah, I was gonna say two out of three on the first one, the third one I don't . . .

I'd rather have them throw government out of schools all together, and turn that all over to state, local, county and city control. I wouldn't want a federal mandate on education, and I agree with your statement on individual responsibility for retirement. I don't think we ever should be involved in any of it.

Health care and retirement.

I don't think the government should be involved in any of those. And the government in part the (inaudible) what private (inaudible) did at the begin of the century quite well.

How do you work Medicaid and Medicare, things like that that you know . . .

You don't.

So if you don't have money, you . . .

The privatarians begin another century.

This country's gotta pay for health care for this country.

You can't tell them to have the government pay for it, the government's proved that.

MODERATOR—SOME BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MEET.

Basic responsibility is what we're trying to get to. In other words, provide or set up or establish or direct or get something going in that direction. Not insure that it happens, but force, you know, something to go through. No, force is a bad word, but direct the people to get things going. In other words, back to the free trade and everything, is . . . set the guidelines or something like that, keep things in par. But let state, local, city, you know, take over the . . . run it. But the government has got to oversee it.

And make sure that we can provide an education so . . . like that, and we can take care of the kids or whoever it is, all the way through.

Well, there is an argument that can be made that's . . . you shouldn't be spent on those and then we shouldn't be collecting as much tax to . . . I'm not sure I . . . in fact I don't necessarily agree with that, but there's not anything that can be made that way.

MODERATOR—TO OUR NEW STATEMENT.

THE EROSION OF MORAL VALUES AND THE WEAKENING OF THE FAMILY
IS THE GREATEST CRISIS FACING OUR COUNTRY TODAY.

Shall we split this too?

MODERATOR—TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK OF THE STATEMENT. I'M NOT
ADVOCATING ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, I JUST WANNA KNOW WHAT YOU THINK
OF WHAT I'M READING.

The changes that have occurred with respect to the families have had a negative impact on this country. I don't know if that has anything to do with moral erosion or not. I don't know if the (inaudible) are even.

It's a (inaudible) thing. You can go back, I'm not a historian or anything, but you can go back and see and probably track where the family unit has kind of broken down and the social (inaudible) had to ramp up in order to . . . because of that. I'm not sure how the moral thing fits, I mean you can make a connection, obviously, by saying, 'well, people are screwing up now on each other,' morals are dropping, that has something to do with it.

It also has to do with your moral values, what you believe your morals are, anyway, so it's a give-and-take on that one. One person's morals may say one thing, versus another person's.

That statement as you read, it to me carries a lot of . . . it's very loaded, it seems to me, with what could be construed as a lot of different . . . and you have to bring your own stuff to how you interpret that statement. What are your morals? What's moral to me may not be to, you know, to somebody else. And that's what makes that statement hard for me to just come out and say, "Yes, I completely agree with that." I can't say that.

I'm pretty safe, I think, in saying that I disagree with it. I think that morals in the family are just sometimes . . . because it's just maybe an issue about personal responsibility. I think that a modified family unit can work just fine, and I think, you know, morals are pretty relative to people, as long as they treat each other decently in society, I think we're fine. I think it's just a lack of personal responsibility that's (inaudible).

I'm gonna answer no, I don't agree with that, because I think that the most recent data finally showed a reversal in the deterioration of the nuclear family. Single mothers have dropped eight percent in the most recent studies since '96. That's a pretty rapid decline there, and I think it's just a matter of individuals realizing they're better off in terms of economics, in terms of happiness and everything if they preserve some kind of family order in their lives. And it's in

their best interest, and I don't think it has so much to do with government policies like the Welfare Reform Act, as some are crediting this recent reversal in. But I don't think that's the biggest crisis facing us by any means. I think things are definitely better and the family's getting better today than maybe they were five, six years ago.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT. NEXT STATEMENT.

IN ORDER TO SUCCEED IN TODAY'S WORLD, WE MUST BE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND EMBRACE CHANGE AS THE WORLD AROUND US CHANGES.

Oh, I'll agree with that.

Look at . . . what was it . . . I think it was like 1939 or something like that, the . . . what's that place that had departments say, "Okay, we can't invent anything more."?

Everything that could possibly be invented has been invented.

Right, so keeping everything mind closed, if you believed everything they said it was like, "Wait a minute."

I think it also kind of ties to, you know, what you just talked about in terms of the family. I don't see the family eroding as much as changing. I think to find a family, you know, twenty years ago, was very different to plan than today. I think they're changing in terms of technology and the economy and you know, everything around us changes, so . . . how we communicate.

I agree with how we communicate has changed, but I don't know if the . . . I don't know if I can agree with you about the family having changed.

Well, I say that in terms of years ago, when you were married and had a family, where did your mom and dad live? They moved in with you, and so your family was you, your wife, your children and your mom and dad, and so your family was maybe bigger and it was, it had extended family, maybe your in-laws moved in and it just was a bigger group. So now you have single parents, you have two sets of parents as kids. I don't know, so it's a different definition.

Grandparents were . . .

A lot of the grandparents raising their grandchildren as opposed to their situation, so . . .

MODERATOR—OKAY. NEXT ONE.

THERE'S A RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT TO TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE WHO CAN'T TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.

How do you differentiate between those who can't and those who won't?

That's the question. That's the big question for me.

Right.

I would say no. Because you know, it might give them more opportunities, but don't hold the responsibility. I would say that's the responsibility of the family or the parents or whatever, you know, that type of thing.

It just depends what you're talking about. I mean, it's like I would say, I don't know, you know that's a broad scope. You can have a (inaudible) you talk about elderly people, you know . . . So if you don't, what's the alternative? That's the other side of the coin. So without knowing what exactly that statement is and what the parameters are . . .

I'm gonna have to go further on that one. My wife's a nurse, and like, she's doing a bunch of the homeless, and I'm pretty harsh for a conservative, but still it . . . you know, a lot of your other (inaudible) clinical issues. I'm pretty big on people taking care of themselves if they can, but I think there's definitely a population out there that needs the help. And so I would argue that there are individuals that need help to get by.

Ultimately it would be nice to take a lot of the population and make them less dependent. But just to immediately say, hey you're on your own, there's nothing available that would (inaudible).

Clears the gap.

I mean I would love to be able to say that government should not be in that business, but realistically, I don't think that . . . I'm pretty sure it's not realistic to expect any other agency to rise to the challenge of providing for the people who can't provide for themselves.

(Many talking at once.)

I love the way Carl started this, I agree a hundred percent. You know, it depends on how you differentiate that. And my theory is, when the government takes responsibility for taking care of people, it becomes an enabler. And that's my big problem with charging the government to take care of people.

And they don't ask the questions, can't alone.

They can't.

They don't because they're part of that program (inaudible) bigger, then you want more people to take care of, so they don't ask for much.

MODERATOR—SO IN OTHER WORDS, IT WOULD BECOME A PROBLEM. ALL RIGHT, NEXT STATEMENT.

WE'VE GONE TOO FAR IN PUSHING EQUAL RIGHTS IN THIS COUNTRY.

I thought that in 1974, when we got the (inaudible) for reversed discrimination, and I was going to Cal-Davis at the time.

I can't disagree with it. I mean the group of us here are the guys that stand to lose the most from it. But still, you know, I mean . . . I guess a lot of guys that wouldn't have had the opportunity if they hadn't. I think that there's a real danger of it going too far. But I think it's actually . . . it's a pretty positive response.

I think that everyone has to play on the same field. What I mind is when someone is getting help to play on that field.

I think it should be about ability, but so much of ability's based on perception that you've gotta get some people into the role before you'll have the conception that they could do it. I mean, you could argue that twenty, thirty years ago, people would have said a woman couldn't do a job. And the fact is that she might have been capable, but if nobody around her believed it, it wouldn't happen. And so I hate to say it, but I don't see a way around it. It's just human nature. You've gotta force some people into those roles to make it happen. And I get screwed by it just as often as anybody. I mean, I think there's a real danger of discrimination against white guys. You know, I mean my company's saying that half the jobs out there are not (inaudible) anymore. But nevertheless, I think it's sort of a necessary evil.

MODERATOR—WHO ELSE HAS BEEN THEIR INFLUENCE?

I think at this point, I don't think they've gone too far, I think we've reached the line. And it's hard, I'm only 34 years old, I didn't live through civil rights and protest them, but I've seen with the government coming in to private organizations like the Recee-Piecee market and golf thing, telling private organizations what rules they're going to play by it, re-writing the rules for people. I (inaudible) that's across the line.

I think that's a very different (inaudible) because the judiciary changing law, that's not the judiciary's function.

That's following the Americans for Disabilities Act which is (inaudible, many talking at once).

I technically qualify for a judicial . . .

MODERATOR—SO YOU WOULD STAND AS A JUDICIAL (INAUDIBLE, MANY TALKING AT ONCE).

Not gone far enough.

I think when we still see organizations like the Ku Klux Klan and you know, hate groups and hate crimes, that we still have a long ways to go.

MODERATOR—OKAY. ALL RIGHT, NEXT ONE.

THIS COUNTRY WOULD HAVE A LOT LESS PROBLEMS IF THERE WERE MORE EMPHASIS ON TRADITIONAL VALUES.

What's traditional?

Are we talking traditional values just like in 1900, 1907, 1930, 1940?

MODERATOR—YOU TELL ME. WHAT DOES TRADITIONAL VALUE MEAN? THIS IS JUST A STATEMENT, I'M NOT TRYING TO . . .

It's good.

I'm kind of like on the same line as . . . you know, my traditional values come from my heritage is a zillion . . . is a big difference than coming from somebody that is . . . their background is English or something like that. So traditional values in a melting pot, you know, like the United States, is a big difference, okay. Now if you're sticking to your own traditional values of your family all the way through instead of deviating, then you're still a separating country.

Well how about American traditional value?

What is American traditional value?

Hard work, get ahead, get an education, you know, stick to the rules of society, play by the rule of law.

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

Right. Take advantage of it.

See, so you're . . . it is kind of bloated, depending on what your upbringing was or what your traditions were and that type of thing.

I'd agree with David, I think traditional values is sort of a meaningless term to me at this point. I'm not sure what it means anymore.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT. NEXT ONE.

PEOPLE LIKE ME CAN STILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM.

I don't feel that I can, to be honest with you, and when the election comes around every four years, or two years even, I just . . . I try to listen to the politicians, the people that are running for office and try and establish their positions on different topics, and I just get lost in the rhetoric, I get lost in the spin, and it's extremely frustrating for me, and so many times I think that I'm . . . and it's gotten to a point where I don't even vote for the person anymore, I vote for the philosophy of the liberal movement or the conservative movement. I had a tough time answering what I was to come to this organization tonight. I mean, I ended up voting for Gore, but I voted

for Gore because I wanted my vote to go on the liberal agenda as opposed to the more conservative. But if anyone asked me, I'd say I'm an ultra-moderate liberal. I mean, I just have that much difficulty. And the answer to your question is no, I just . . . I don't feel like I made much of an impact.

MODERATOR—OKAY. HOW ABOUT THE REST?

Oh, and a bigger (inaudible). I mean we had a president-elect who was selected by the electoral college who won. And we had someone who lost who was popular-voted by the people of this country. Therefore, my vote really didn't count, because the electoral college picked which president I now have as my president. So no, I feel, after this last election, now I have even less power than I did before.

I'd agree with you in part, but I disagree with you in part too. I'm not concerned with the electoral college, because the Bush to win and Gore to lose, that's happened before.

It has. It's kind of happened with (inaudible), right?

It's happened several times. That's not a big deal, that's the way the country . . . that's the way the our government was constructed.

Right. With the electoral college.

And that just helps to take insure that every vote from every place is counted equally, or as closely as possible.

MODERATOR—AND SO WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK?

Negative. Not a zip.

We can make a difference. It's very difficult to make a difference and an impact on a national level, but the statement doesn't say that you can make it a difference on a national level or a state level.

See, I think it's two-minded right now.

(Many talking at once.)

You can make a difference in the political process.

I mean (inaudible) tabs are . . . they're a hundred bucks for a reason. One guy did it, Tim [Eiman], so can I do it? No. I don't have enough energy to do what Tim [Eiman] did. I don't necessarily wanna do it, but I've seen it done on a local level. But now, is one guy gonna stuff his way all the way to the White House and change the world? No, that is not gonna happen. But I have seen . . . like I said, our car tabs run a hundred bucks for a reason, 'cause one guy pushed and pushed and pushed and he did it. I'm all for it.

Keep them that way. (Inaudible) free-tax limitation. I forward a 747.

All for it. Just you have to keep going. Especially on a national level.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, NEXT ONE.

GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE SURE ALL PEOPLE HAVE A CHANCE FOR AN EQUAL START IN LIFE.

That's boring. We're back to the civil rights, we're back to the . . .

Yeah, we are getting boring. (Inaudible).

Embryonic stage, though, where you come from?

That's tough. I mean do we go back to this, is there any issues with the . . . is there any retardation, you know . . .

Now you got crack babies being born, and life certainly wasn't their choice, so at what point does the government try to step in to give them an equal opportunity in society?

Right. I'm gonna take your question on totally Declaration of Independence, constitutional basis, and answer yes. We're given the same opportunities to rise to our greatest level of personal ability, and under the fair rules that were set forth by that, even though it does not work perfect, I think, yeah, they do have a responsibility.

I would have to disagree with that.

(Many talking at once.)

I would say, but for opportunity. An equal opportunity to do it, not equal responsibility.

Dave, you get a 100,000 dollar trust fund to go to college when you turn eighteen.

Yeah.

That's how we're getting them.

I agree, you don't get that kind of thing. We're talking about just the opportunities available to you and the (inaudible).

Well you know at some point the bar . . . I agree with that statement that the bar for the responsibility of government to give everyone an equal start, that's pretty low. Because...

MODERATOR—BEFORE WE GO TO FAR, I'M SORRY. WE'VE JUST GOT A LOT OF STUFF AND I DON'T WANNA KEEP YOU GUYS HERE TOO LATE. (PACKETS ARE HANDED OUT AND EXPLAINED). HANDOUT ONE AND HANDOUT TWO. HANDOUT ONE ASKS YOU, "WHEN YOU'RE IN A POSITIVE MOOD, WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT GEORGE W. BUSH?" . . . AND THEN GO AHEAD AND FLIP TO HANDOUT TWO AND ANSWER, "WHAT ARE THE DOUBTS YOU HAVE ABOUT BUSH? WHAT WORRIES YOU ABOUT HIM?" WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT BUSH?
Tax reform.

Put accountability and responsibility on one's own actions. That was a consistent theme that he had that I believe in. It was . . .

MODERATOR—WHAT'S THAT?

Just the idea of accountability and responsibility in one's own actions.

MODERATOR—HAS HE DEMONSTRATED THAT?

I don't know if he's demonstrated it so much. That's kind of hard to . . . I can put it into terms that this level we deal with it. In other words, you screw up, you're going to jail, in the simplest terms, that's it. Now at his level, tough one. I mean, is he following through on the promises that he made? I guess that's one way of looking at it. I lost track of all the problems that are out there on the campaign trail anyway.

MODERATOR—WE'RE GONNA TALK A LOT ABOUT BUSH FROM HERE, AND I KNOW HE'S ONLY BEEN IN OFFICE FOR SEVEN MONTHS, BUT SINCE THAT'S ALL WE GOT TO WORK WITH, LET'S WORK WITH IT, YOU KNOW? I KNOW A LOT OF THE ANSWERS TO A LOT OF THESE THINGS IS GONNA BE LIKE, "WELL, IT'S EARLY. LET'S WAIT AND SEE." BUT YOU KNOW, LET'S TRY TO WORK WITH WHAT WE'VE GOT AS BEST WE CAN.

Yeah, I like his idea on the (inaudible). I just like the fact that he was saying one thing and he would answer, like you're saying, it may not be the exact implementation that he talked about, but I don't feel like he's changed characters as he came into office. You know, like he said he was conservative and, low and behold, he's implemented conservative policies.

I like the fact that he is clear. He's much more black-and-white than we have had, and it's a refreshing change from that perspective. He's not wishy-washy. He makes a decision and this is what he's gonna do. So you know where he stands, you know where he's gonna be on things, you're not second guessing. It keeps him pretty plain and simple.

I'd say straightforward. I appreciate him, he's straightforward. And I added, even when I disagreed with him on several issues, I've got the sense that he still believes what he believes, and wasn't going by focus groups.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT. HOW ABOUT DOUBTS? WHAT WORRIES YOU ABOUT HIM?

He takes too long of vacations for first year in office.

I had an . . . I don't know where I get this from, but a possible lack of vision. The bigger picture kind of thing, and I'm not sure where I just got that feeling. I don't know . . .

He's dependent on Dad.

I think . . . I'm not sure what it is, but that's just . . . I don't know if anybody else has that feeling.

The only things I wrote down are his lack of experience at the national level.

Maybe that's it.

Well, mine's at the international level. It's really almost amazing, how much lack of international experience he's had prior to being president.

Leadership and international experience.

I got a feeling on the campaign trail, nothing has happened to dispel that thought in my mind since he was inaugurated, that he's just not very bright. He's just not very bright.

My concerns would be environment and his intentions to go to Alaska and drill up there. Keep a few places sacred.

You know, my biggest worry about him is that he sounds just like his Dad. You know, it's like you wonder how much of the policy is really his, and how much was pounded into him or was set up by guys that we don't hear from.

It's a politics family.

I guess, you know, I support George Bush, but I think too many insiders, his political policy is myopic, and he's not looking forward, and there's no reason Republicans couldn't be leaders on the environment. I mean, we already had the farmers. The farmers are a great example of people who really understand the environment. I think he's getting some advice that's stale and worn out.

He relies on too many other people for (inaudible) I think.

Well, is he supposed to run it himself the whole time?

(Many talking at once.)

MODERATOR—OKAY. WHAT I’M GONNA DO NOW IS I’M GONNA READ YOU SOME WORDS OR PHRASES . . . “STRONG LEADER”?

No.

I think that’s a poor descriptor.

MODERATOR—OKAY. WHY? I SEE A LOT OF HEADS SHAKING. WHY?

He hasn’t established himself as a strong leader, even when he was Governor of Texas or anything else.

Well, I think the jury’s out. And I think what he’s doing with our reform policy in Europe is slowly starting to take hold. I mean, he’s changed the tune.

He could be a leader, but not a strong leader.

Not yet, no.

I just don’t think it’s been proven yet, so I can’t agree or disagree. I’d need more time. I need more evidence.

I’d say, like the strong leader portion for me at least would come in like this more of a feeling of personal character or something like that. Like, I think he’s got some good ideas and I agree with those, but I’m just not sure he’s got the strength or the will or anything. And that’s what I . . . I guess the jury’s still out with me.

Well, he hasn’t done anything outward or boldly to say, “Hey, I’m a leader.” I think Clinton established himself in different ways, and I think even his father, George Bush Sr., as president did. The biggest thing that we’ve gotten so far is a tax rebate check, and I think it’s real hard to make a decision on this evidence at this point.

MODERATOR—OKAY. HOW ABOUT “TOO CONSERVATIVE”?

No.

No.

For my taste, yeah.

There’s a scale there, but . . .

Actually, he’s a lot less than I thought he might be.

MODERATOR—WHY IS THAT?

Because of his daughters.

(Many talking at once.)

MODERATOR—IT TOOK YOU ALMOST AN HOUR TO GET THERE, BUT YOU DID GET THERE. WHAT WERE YOU SAYING?

It was just, you know, going and looking at maybe some of the (inaudible) kind of from the right pushing and stuff like that. I thought you know, that would be an influence on some of those policies and that, but apparently he's got some moderation in there on some other things, so . . .

MODERATOR—LIKE WHAT?

I think the environment is a big issue. Who runs the interior, I'm not sure.

[Gillmer].

Yeah, she's . . . she seems to be able to kind of do some things that might be not . . . maybe all conservative. I mean, it's a good balance in there, so I would say for me it's not yet at least. Who knows.

MODERATOR—YOU SAID TOO CONSERVATIVE FOR YOU, RIGHT?

Yeah, for me. And I don't have a lot of evidence to back that up, again, because we're only dealing with seven months. But I've been a little disappointed in the whole stem cell flap, the way that's been handled.

Talk to the Pope before you make a decision.

You know, yeah, I mean it just . . .

MODERATOR—YOU'LL BE TALKING IN SICILIAN DOWN THERE.

I don't believe in playing God like that, you know, so the stem cell thing, I have to back him up on that one.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT. I DON'T WANNA GO OFF ON THE STEM CELL TANGENT. ANYONE ELSE THINK TOO CONSERVATIVE?

No, actually I think . . . I was actually surprised he's more moderate than I was expecting.

MODERATOR—OKAY. HOW ABOUT "SHARES YOUR VALUES"? HOW WELL DOES THAT DESCRIBE HIM?

I'd say not very well. I mean, I agree with some of his basic ideology, but in terms of values, I mean, I don't know. I've just got, like, too much of a silver spoon image to feel like I could really associate with the guy.

I was gonna say, I don't think any of us have been in the shoes he's been through.

Well, it doesn't matter if you have a silver spoon or whatever, lower class or anything, you can still have the same values. I would say the ideology of, you know, like being stand-up and being accounted for and stuff like that, and you're gonna pay the price for whatever you did, those type of things. I would say yes in that respect. But of his other values, I really don't know of them as well.

I would say he's closer to my values than Clinton. I mean, if I have to compare the two Presidents, Bush would be closer to mine.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT. HOW ABOUT “HONEST AND TRUSTWORTHY”?

More than Clinton.

Absolutely.

Just like his dad. You know, I'd say he's following in his dad's footsteps in that respect, and you know . . .

I think he's bent over backwards to try and be honest to his campaign pledges in what he's tried to implement. The criticism I've heard on the radio from one person was, “oh my gosh, he's doing all the things he promised he would do in the campaign. How dare he, he barely won.” Like he doesn't have the right to pursue the things he campaigned on. I think he's been totally honest and up-front, even again when I've disagreed with him.

Yeah, that's . . . even though I may not agree with him, I do think he's been very honest about what he believes.

MODERATOR—OKAY. “FAVORS BIG BUSINESS AND THE WEALTHIEST OVER THE INTERESTS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC”?

Oh, yeah!

Look what he did with Texas.

But if you look at big business, if you support big business and big business grows, doesn't other people get employed and businesses grow and prosper to help the economy?

Yeah, I agree with that. I haven't seen it overtly that he's made a choice that, “okay, I can do this for big business, but it will affect the general public in a negative way.” I haven't seen it. Maybe there's been something there that I missed, I don't know.

One of the issues I saw that came up in terms of fundraising for his campaign came from oil companies, and you know, early on we saw a potential drilling in the growth there. But there were all the, you know, public unrest about Floridians, “my God, we’re the ones that probably got you in office and now you’re gonna drill and potentially ruin the Florida Keys.”

We’re moving to Alaska.

(Many talking at once.)

I know he’s completely . . .

No, I’m just saying that big business, he was sure going there, and I think when it just became too hot then, you know, backed off. But he certainly would have done that if it hadn’t gotten such bad publicity.

I know he’s completely refused to step in in the . . . and get involved at any level in the whole Microsoft anti-trust thing. So, you know, have the data point that way.

Big business, let’s face it. I’m still trying to take and understand how the . . . any president or any justice department could take and accuse Microsoft of anti-trust, given the anti-trust laws that we have.

MODERATOR—AGAIN, I DON’T WANNA GO THERE. I KNOW WITH THIS GROUP AND MICROSOFT, WE COULD GO FOR A LONG TIME. BUT BIG BUSINESS AND THE WEALTHIEST OVER THE INTERESTS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANYONE ELSE?

You know, my perception leans towards him being a little bit heavy on the big business side. I’m not necessarily sure that it’s hurting the general public, but I think certainly a significant part of the population is gonna believe that. And I’ve certainly seen that in the media and after I started wondering.

MODERATOR—OKAY. “CARES ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE YOU,” HOW WELL DOES THAT DESCRIBE BUSH?

He doesn’t know I exist.

I would say yes, just because you know, I think the . . . he’s all about just taking the responsibility for (inaudible), and work and making and just doing things for yourself.

Yeah, assuming we’re not all criminals in here, I think we’re all about the same and we’re up-standing people, go out and get a job, follow the laws, yeah.

If you look at his policy, yeah, he does care about the people. If you’re just looking at . . .

People like me, yes. People like a lot of the people that I know and like to spend time with and am friends with, no.

Those are the criminals?

No, no, I mean I'm for . . . I have a lot of friends who are gay and lesbian, a lot of friends who are, you know, in other minorities and I really don't get the impression that George W. Bush cares about them.

I get the impression that he doesn't know how to care about us.

Well, that may be true, but I think he's trying to reach out, he just doesn't know how to get a handle on these groups. I mean, let's face it, the guy was born and raised and bred the way he was.

In Texas.

I don't think . . . I think it's the job of the president to represent all the nation's people and in that regard, I think that George Bush is representing the whole body pretty well.

MODERATOR—OKAY. HOW ABOUT THE NEXT ONE, "IN OVER HIS HEAD"?

Um-hmm.

Um-hmm.

MODERATOR—WHY? I GOT A COUPLE OF YESSES HERE, WHY?

I would say that there's . . . like what we discussed earlier, how'd you put it Scott, he needs some fresh blood giving him advice, something like that.

Yeah, foreign policy experience.

But that's true for almost any president in the first year of their . . . of office, that they are in over their head.

MODERATOR—SURE. OKAY, SCOTT, WHY WERE YOU SAYING YES?

I think early on, and I hadn't seen anything change with him, I mean you know, the guy was just battling to say, you know, "I'm my own man. I'm not my dad's son. I'm standing up here, I'm gonna be guiding." And he seemed like he really had to work hard to try to prove that, and I don't know that he has. I think in his first foray into the international world, where he had zero experience in the international arena, and he goes over to Europe and just pushes everybody back on their heels and said, you know, what we are and aren't gonna do as a first opportunity to walk in and show some leadership, I think he was in over his head. I think that was not the right thing to do on his first outing.

Wait 'til the second.

I don't get the impression that he's in over his head. I get the impression that he's struggling, but I think that's pretty natural for anybody taking on such a big job. I mean you know, it's (inaudible) would be that he's struggling a bit to swim, but I think he could still get across the lake.

I don't think he's over his head. I think he's new, and he's gonna fall down a little bit, but he's got a great team around him.

I think that's the only reason I think he's not over his head, is because he has . . . because of the . . .

Experienced people around him.

Because he has the people around him.

This is one of my criticisms, ironically, that's one of the reasons I've criticized him too, saying he needs some fresh ideas in there too.

Right.

I'm glad Colin Powell's there. Thank God!

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, HOW ABOUT THE NEXT ONE, "BRINGING NEEDED CHANGE TO WASHINGTON"?

Oh, yeah!

Yeah.

He's done more of that than we've seen in the past eight years for some of (inaudible).

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU MEAN, DAN?

Well, I mean, obviously coming on the tails of Clinton, it wouldn't be too hard to bring more credibility to Washington. But I think, you know, on this first page, one of the first things that I wrote down was, when I listen to George Bush speak, I believe what he's saying. You know, he's got a way of communicating to me that I think he's accessible, and I believe him. I think he's honest. And even today, still after the election, I feel that way.

MODERATOR—OKAY. WHAT ELSE? IS HE BRINGING CHANGE TO...

Strongly agree.

In many ways you're right, I liked Clinton in a lot of ways. I thought some of the things he did were stupid as hell, and I . . . one of the things it seemed like, there became a lack of accountability, not just at the White House, but at all the other offices. And you're seeing that, you know, more and more, the FBI and all, and I think George Bush has laid the line down very early and said, "Hey, screwups, you're out." You know, you're accountable, and if anybody goes over the edge, if you're caught at anything, that's it. So I think that that was needed.

He's more black and white, you know, good/bad into it. You know, more of a steady role.

The pendulum has swung back the other way.

MODERATOR—OKAY. "CONTROLLED BY OTHERS"?

I don't know if I like the world "control." Rather, influenced.

I wouldn't say controlled, no.

MODERATOR—IS HE INFLUENCED TOO MUCH, NOT ENOUGH, JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT?

I'd say a little too much.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK?

I don't . . . I was just gonna say, I don't really know, I don't know, 'cause if you believe he's influenced too much, than how much of what he's saying is his own words? I mean, that's what we've been talking about, we believe he's honest and we believe he's credible, so then if we start saying, "Well, wait a minute . . .," if we think he's influenced too much, then those aren't his words. And that isn't the feeling I get. I get the feeling that when he talks, this is stuff that he believes in strongly now. Can someone plant a seed that deeply if he . . . I don't know.

When the plane went down in China, you know, Colin Powell, I thought, "Boy, it's a good thing that he's there," and Bush didn't make a whole lot of statements about it, but when he did, it sure felt to me like it was Colin Powell telling him, "You know, this is what our direction's gonna be."

Yeah.

That's his job.

I mean on the one hand, (inaudible, many talking at once).

He's just an influencer, not a controller, right?

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, GOOD. I WANNA FLIP TO HANDOUT THREE. WHAT WE GOT HERE IS A LIST OF FIFTEEN PEOPLE, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS WHO ARE

AFFECTED BY THE ACTIONS OF THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON . . . ALL RIGHT, “BIG BUSINESS”? EIGHT. HOW MANY PUT A STAR NEXT TO THAT ONE? TWO. “CHARITIES”? ONE. PUT A STAR?

Yeah.

MODERATOR—“HMO’S AND INSURANCE COMPANIES”? ONE. HOW ABOUT “SCHOOL STUDENTS”? TWO. “SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS”? ZERO. “THE WEALTHIEST”? TWO. “RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVES”? ONE. “OIL COMPANIES”? FIVE. DID ANYBODY PUT A STAR NEXT TO THAT ONE? THREE. “U.S. MILITARY”? FOUR. ANYBODY HAVE A STAR ON THAT ONE?

Yeah, I put a star by that one.

MODERATOR—“PRO-LIFE, ANTI-ABORTION GROUPS”? ZERO. “THE NRA”? ZERO. “CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTORS”? TWO. EITHER OF YOU HAVE A STAR ON THAT?

No.

MODERATOR—“HISPANICS”? ONE. STAR?

No.

MODERATOR—“MIDDLE CLASS”? TWO. DO YOU HAVE A STAR? NO.
(End of Side)

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT YOUR “POLITICAL ALLIES”? ONE. I’VE ONLY GOT SEVEN STARS HERE.

I’ve got “public school students” starred.

MODERATOR—BIG BUSINESS SEEMS TO BE THE BIG WINNER HERE. EIGHT CIRCLES. WHY?

Well, it just seems very cool business, I mean, you know, from what change has done to Microsoft, I mean certainly that the fact that the government was neutral is what (inaudible) to inquire a little while ago. Perhaps they were getting a ton of opposition on that. It also ties back to oil and everything else in my eyes. It just seems like everything he’s doing is just very focused.

I think it’s that his way of looking at, “Okay, if I help big business, it’s gonna filter down through the economy and help out everybody else, per se.” So that’s gonna be his focus. It’s his avenue or his road of fulfilling his promise, campaign promise.

MODERATOR—GOING THROUGH BIG BUSINESS?

Um-hmm.

MODERATOR—WHO ELSE?

Well, that's kind of the supply side argument. I mean I just . . . I haven't seen any actions there, aside from environmental recommendations, which are heavily focused on oil, which is why I circled oil and not big business on that particular issue. I haven't seen any actions. I mean John Ashcroft hasn't said he's gonna back off Microsoft even last time on the inside word.

MODERATOR—AND OIL COMPANIES IS THE OTHER ONE THAT GOT THE MOST VOTES BESIDES BIG BUSINESS. WHY'D YOU PUT THAT?

That's the thing they're most vocal about. They started with the Gulf, "we're gonna drill there and then we'll maybe shut down this and we're still gonna drill and in Alaska." Who knows, if that doesn't work, it might be on the California coast. But that was one that they're definitely trying to work on the energy issues that this country has, and that seems to be their main drive, or what they think is the best way to alleviate them.

The oil companies and the HMO's and insurance companies are among the biggest businesses in the country.

True.

So it's quite natural for me to take and pick at least two of those three. I didn't pick the HMO's and the insurance companies, only because . . .

Oil and HMO's and everything all into one big business.

I selected big business because of oil companies, or vice versa.

MODERATOR—PROBABLY SOME OF THESE ARE A LITTLE BIT REDUNDANT, BUT . . .

I circled oil companies and again it's just because if you look at his energy proposals, they really didn't give much to natural gas and clean coal too, which probably could . . . I understand why they're looking for oil and I understand why they wanna bring out more oil, but there seem to be a little bit of a disproportionate emphasis on oil energy policy in that proposal, and so I felt that didn't look good for Bush or Cheney.

MODERATOR—OKAY. ALL RIGHT, WE'VE GOT A FEW FOLKS ON THE "U.S. MILITARY." WHY THAT ONE?

Look at Cheney. You know, (inaudible) joined his staff and everything, but big military and everything, plus you know, look at his . . . if you're going back to Bush, what he's done with the military, you know what his father's done, you know, try to build it up, he's doing the same thing, setting down standards. You're gonna be accountable for what you're doing, you're

gonna make it tougher to get in, you know, set back to the standards that it used to be instead of, “Okay, come on in. We need some people to carry a gun,” instead of actually know what to do.

And again, I brought this up before, I mean the missile defense system he’s talking about is gonna be one of the most expensive endeavors we’ve ever gone into, and he’s traveling around the world trying to sell that package to people. So . . .

Big business.

Well, that too.

I kind of wish I’d circled big business now.

MODERATOR—JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON. ALL RIGHT. A COUPLE PEOPLE PUT “MIDDLE CLASS.” WHY DO YOU SAY “MIDDLE CLASS”?

Yeah, I just put it down because of the tax cut. I mean, it seemed that that was the first thing I heard him really address, and so just getting the check back in the mail. So I guess I read some articles early on about the focus he was putting against that initiative, and the fact that he actually talked about it and delivered it was pretty significant to me.

Also the tax reform, all the things that he’s doing. I mean we’re . . . the first time in years we’re able to actually increase our 401K now from what it was for the past so many years. Now it’s gonna go up, and your IRAs could go up, your education IRAs can go up, those of us with kids, 500 bucks a year was ridiculous, you can’t do anything with that. Then you know, now he’s . . . the marriage penalty kind of goes away. He’s doing a lot of things that make a lot of sense from where we sit financially. I mean, all things that are beneficial for us and it doesn’t take anything out of anybody else’s pocket. You know, no one’s going without because we’re allowed to save more in our own 401K. Those type of things make a lot of sense, they should have been done years ago.

We don’t want you accumulating too much wealth.

You mean you don’t want (inaudible) for Social Security?

MODERATOR—OKAY, NEXT ONE WE’RE GONNA DO IS TALK A LITTLE BIT MORE IN DETAIL ABOUT THE JOB BUSH HAS DONE ON A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC ISSUES . . . FIRST ONE IS EDUCATION. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT GEORGE W. BUSH AND EDUCATION?

I . . . my common theme is accountability and responsibility with him, and if I liked what he was saying early on about accountability and you know, responsibility and . . . but it’s a tough, I mean your daughter who’s going through school now, it’s a tough nut to crack. I don’t think that he’s gonna get the voucher program through, it looks like they dropped that. I don’t know if that was the best plan to have to begin with, because there’s arguments made on both sides that poor performing schools do close down, everybody goes to another school, then those get over-

loaded. So it's a tough nut to crack. I like the idea that he's at least trying something. For how many years the Department of Education has tried to set down rules and this and that, and I'm not sure if it's worked all that well, so at least he's trying something new. That's one thing I can say, that he's at least having some new ideas out there floating around, that I haven't heard of, or we haven't heard of, in years.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WHAT ELSE, BUSH AND EDUCATION?

I think what he's . . . his end run on this thing is he can't get what he wants because it's a drastic change, which is to take the power out of federal government and put it back to the states. But I think what he's gonna do is, he's gonna fund the heck out of this stuff, give it all the money in the world, 'cause I'll tell you what, money for education, even as fiscally conservative as I am, I don't pucker up on that one. Most of us relax. And I think he's gonna fund the heck out of it, and then he's gonna tear it all down and say, "Here's the states' money. We're gonna let them be the laboratories of educational democracy and let them deal with it," and take the power out of Washington. I hope that's where his end run is. I think that's kind of where he's going.

It'd be nice to think that. I'm not . . . I haven't seen enough signs to take and tell me that something like that's gonna happen.

I think I generally like to hear what he's saying, I think he believes in it, I just haven't really seen it being delivered yet. So wait and see. But I think that he generally wants . . . genuinely wants to do something about it. Whether he'll be able to or not, who knows.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT FOREIGN POLICY?

He needs experience.

That was the one thing he really wasn't trained for going into the job. You know, I mean, he's just gonna have to . . . it's just on the job training, but there's nothing drastic that comes out of the learning attitude.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY? WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT BUSH AND SOCIAL SECURITY?

Oh, he's brought mainstream appeal to this idea of taking your own private savings account and managing . . . really managing portions of your money.

Yeah, I agree. I hope they're gonna get that done. It doesn't have to be all of it, but I'd like to have some of it.

Maybe he doesn't get all of it done, maybe he gets just a little teeny thing established . . .

MODERATOR—IN THAT DIRECTION.

That whole concept is really on the mainstream table here now.

Yeah, before it was . . . well, didn't it start with McCain? Wasn't he a big guy of that?

Dick Arney kicked it around a long time ago.

Yeah, that's true.

MODERATOR—ANYBODY DISLIKE THAT PLAN?

(Many talking at once.)

I don't know if people are smart enough to do a balance with it. I mean, that's my initial response.

There's the different plans that mean . . .

You don't have to. You can have . . . the thing I've kind of read about it is, you have a choice at least. You can win up to what the government's gonna do, or you can kind of choose and do some of it on your own and . . . So this is good.

Well, if you can. I know if the government has the money, like it has for Social Security, I'll never see a (inaudible) of it.

Yeah.

If they have the money, I'll see it.

He's actually taken some of the cynicism away from me. Like, I've always just written Social Security off, and I'm actually starting to think, "Wow, there may actually be a few bonus dollars there when I reach that age." You know, what I felt is nice. During Clinton's era, I just figured they would have spent it all before I got even close.

Just keep funding that far when we can.

Exactly.

MODERATOR—OKAY, SO THINKING ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY, IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE, WHO WOULD YOU TRUST TO HANDLE THE ISSUE, BUSH OR THE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS?

Bush.

Bush.

Absolutely Bush.

MODERATOR—WOULD ANYONE CHOOSE DEMOCRATS?

What do you mean “to handle it”? What do you mean by that, to determine what the policy would be?

MODERATOR—YEAH.

I would say Congress.

MODERATOR—WHY?

I think if you take one group, Bush and his group versus Congress, which is a . . . more of a fifty-fifty group, granted that the Democrats are the majority. But I think you could, with a larger group of people, put together a policy that’s probably more accepting to the United States.

Well, that’s the beauty of policies. Policies aren’t what the Congress produces . . . Congress produces laws. The President produces policies.

See, I look at it this way, is that Congress has an . . . body’s not the word, but it’s easier because the lobbyists and everything like that that they have in Congress, it’s easier to sway you by a vote in Congress than it is with Bush. I trust that Bush is just, you know, (inaudible), the direction that he wants to go with and stuff like that, and with his advisors and stuff like that, that they have a direction on this that I trust, versus a group in Congress that is like, “Okay, well according to this lobbyist, these major groups and everything wanted them to sway, so I’m gonna sway my vote this way and then we’ll develop it accordingly.”

Well, gee, another vote against wishy-washy.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT. HOW ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT? WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT BUSH AND THE ENVIRONMENT?

He’s pro-oil.

That’s not a bad thing.

No, it’s not necessarily bad.

With the technology right now, what they have up in . . . you know, what they’re talking about up in Alaska, with technology now, they can leave it untouched. So it is feasible to have a very nice and clean environment up there if you use technology correctly to go get the oil that’s underneath. Whether or not they will do that is a different story. But . . .

You just hit it. I think Bush is screwed on environmental policy. I don’t think he’s wrong, I think he’s screwed. I think the whole model’s been set up that anything in the wilderness equals destruction of the eco-system. Any drilling equals destruction. And that model is inaccurate, you don’t have . . . just because that was definitely, you know, in the past we’ve treated the

environment like horribly when we expanded our drilling or whatever the case may be, that doesn't mean we have to continue the same practices that were so destructive. But I think he's gonna get hung out on this. And I think especially here by Northwest conservatives.

There are conservatives in the Northwest?

(Inaudible) you mean.

No, I mean conservatives here in the Northwest even who are very pro-environment. Nature Conservancy, I don't consider a liberal organization, you know, I would say. An organization that buys up land and stuff through the free market, I might add.

The challenge of the technology though, you know, when we've had these oil spills for example, and they say, "Well, the new technology and double hull tankers."

Provided you don't run aground when you're drilling.

Right. But the implementation of changing out a fleet of ships to double hull tankers is enormous, and it takes a lot of years to get that done. So you increase oil production, but you're still using, for example, single hull tankers. You're increasing the risk of an oil spill and on and on, so, even though the technology is available, it's cost-prohibitive to implement it, and so you're (inaudible, many talking at once).

Unless you brought it to something new, let's say the northern frontier of Alaska. They could bring in the new technology there and start it there instead of . . . You know, again we're gonna bring in the old stuff and then as the technology improves . . .

MODERATOR—BESIDES DRILLING, ARE THERE OTHER THINGS THAT COME TO MIND?

Look at Texas . . . Well, he's kind of screwed on what he did in Texas because you know, the EPA, he relaxed a lot of policies and everything for a lot of big businesses in order for them to make a profit, you know, for the people, but look at Houston, you can't see it, so...

I like the federalization of a lot of lands in the West. In my mind, my relatives live in that new (inaudible), and they talk about that a lot, and he's not rolling anything back there. I kind of thought he would. He hasn't touched that issue. Clinton federalized, increased the number of acres of federalized land by something like 30 percent in his eight years. And there's been no move by Bush to undo that, which . . .

Define federalized.

BOM and national forest, national park and . . .

Protected.

Yeah, and some he even classified as under the BIA management (inaudible) affairs. I don't know all that.

You know, when I think of Bush and the environment, I . . . it's not that I think that he's necessarily antagonistic or wants to go wreck the environment, but I think that his concern for the environment takes a back seat to other concerns.

Yeah.

That's the impression that I get. That's what I think of when I think of Bush and the environment, it that the environment takes a back seat to other concerns. If he can get to what he wants without harming the environment, well that's a bonus, but if there's . . . the environment has to be harmed in some way, oh well. Sorry.

That's the one thing that concerns me about Bush and the environment, because what I see, and I exactly imagine what you were saying is that if it's expedient, and it doesn't cost anything, then I'm all for the environment. If it's gonna cost more, I'm going to take and opt for paying less at the expense of the environment. I'm not sure where the dividing line is gonna sit. I think there are some studies that have proven that taking environmental care and doing something is far more cost-effective than screwing the environment over and having to fix it long term.

Yeah, I'd agree with your take on it. I guess my interpretation's a little bit different. I see his views as being a little bit more practical or realistic if you will. I think that you're right, I mean he's gonna do it if it's easily done, if it's not then he's gonna go in favor of energy. But I think long term, that's just necessary. And I think he's taking a realistic view of things and I think he's gonna take something of a beating for it. But I think it's the right thing to do.

MODERATOR—OKAY. HOW ABOUT THE ECONOMY? WELL ACTUALLY, BEFORE WE GO TO THAT, SAME QUESTION ON THE ENVIRONMENT, WHO DO YOU TRUST TO HANDLE IT MORE, BUSH OR DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS?

I'm sticking to my first one.

MODERATOR—WHICH IS BUSH?

Yeah. Just because lobbyists can sway your votes in the Congress.

MODERATOR—ANYBODY ELSE ON THE ENVIRONMENT? DEMOCRATS OR BUSH?

I know where the Democrats stand on their policies. They absolutely would take the environment and make that the sacred cow of this whole nation's policy, every policy. So I'd go with Bush.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WHO ELSE?

Democrats.

MODERATOR—WHY?

Well, from the perspective of Bush and the oil drilling and the big business tends to be economics first, that's what we've shown throughout the history of our country, the economics first and, you know, preserve the environment second. And one of the stands of this Democratic platform is to take care of the environment and look for ways to do that while still being a profitable business.

MODERATOR—ANYONE ELSE ON THIS?

I'd have to go with Bush. Just for the same reasons I just talked about.

I'd go with Congress.

MODERATOR—OKAY. WHY?

Well, I agree with what Scott was saying, that it's part of the Democratic platform, I think there's more of a world . . . a long term vision . . . we're here for . . . we're gonna be here for a long time and if we put business as the first priority, eventually we're gonna run out of some of the resources that we have, and (inaudible) product that the global warming thing, but you know, Bush stood against most of the world on that global warming thing, because it wasn't good for this country, only because we had so much more business that he didn't feel it was fair for us to have to play by the same rules that the other countries in the world were. And I mean to me, you know it's hard to say, but I mean I look at the way our weather patterns are and maybe they're gonna change and go back to the way they were, but it seems to me, things are changing around here, and I often wonder if it is the global warming that's starting to take an affect on us. I was kind of disappointed that he did not go along with the majority on that.

Didn't the Senate reject the Kyodo Treaty, 97 to zero, or 95 to five or something? Does anyone know the answer to that?

I don't remember.

MODERATOR—DAVID, YOU'RE MY ALMANAC OF AMERICAN POLITICS AND YOU DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT?

I'm pretty sure it was already rejected 95 to five, and it's just kind of something that conveniently gets forgotten. He didn't reject something that hadn't already been rejected by our Senate overwhelmingly. Not because of the environmental issues, but more because what was being asked of the United States was not the same as what was being asked of China and Mexico and many other developing nations.

(Many talking at once.)

MODERATOR—I DON'T WANNA GO TOO FAR DOWN THE KYOTO. WE CAN GET THERE ALL DAY. JUST TRYING TO GET US THROUGH. WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF GEORGE W. BUSH AND THE ECONOMY?

He's hopeful.

Yeah, I think probably if he does have a line with big business and stuff, that he'll make it easy for them to do business through tax cuts, tax incentives for development, things like that, which all in all will help generate a stronger economy. So I think . . .

MODERATOR—WHO ELSE?

I don't even look for him to do anything, just don't add anything, don't make more bureaucracy, don't make more over-zealous OSHA, you know. I think that business has already learned to play by the rules established pretty well, and that's cumbersome enough. I know Bush will kind of . . . I think he'll keep a pretty stand-off policy, and I think that really right now, I'm surprised there's not more panic about the economy, 'cause things are shaky. Everyone's just kind of holding in there tight. But I think (inaudible) right now, at least from where we look at the economy going in our company, we don't have a panic, and it's because we think Bush won't do anything stupid to screw up the economy, and I think that's keeping a lot of people from jumping off the edge right now, 'cause let's face it, things are definitely on that recession teeter.

One of the things that happened under Clinton was this consumer confidence, this sense that we're a great nation and we are going forward and we are doing great things, and we're doing this, and it was sort of a constant reminder to the people at large that this country is awesome. And I don't hear that from Bush, and one of the things that continues to be reported is the declining consumer confidence in the economy. And that... well, you certainly wouldn't want the White House to do anything right now negatively, that from an economy standpoint I look to the president to lead the nation in terms of a confidence about what the nation's doing economically.

(Inaudible).

Yeah, yeah, that same kind of thing.

I get the sense that he's more focused on the long term than the short term. Like, during Clinton's presidency, I always had the feeling like he was always trying to pump up our confidence, you know, "things are going great," just keep it looking good for the numbers. With . . . And Bush is in sort of a tough position, 'cause I think technology's taken a needed adjustment. Because I could never understand the valuation of some of those companies out there, and I think it's all good but long term. I like the fact that he's staying out of it. You know, I mean, the fact that he's not coming out with some statement about economic policy every week, or trying to push us in one direction instead of just letting business figure it out for itself. And so, eventually, what you're saying, I just like the fact that he's staying out of it and letting things happen on their own. I think the invisible hand will do the work.

Alan Greenspan on irrational exuberance.

1996.

It took him a while to figure out why.

MODERATOR—OKAY. HOW ABOUT PATIENTS' RIGHTS? WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT BUSH AND PATIENTS' RIGHTS?

I touched on it, but I don't know enough to really comment about it.

I can't recall anything that's really come out about it.

Yeah.

I think you could say to the (inaudible)?

No, I can't.

Yeah, I just remembered it was paid with HMOs and patients' rights and what they had, and that's about all I remember out of all the media releases and stuff like that.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, LET ME JUST GIVE YOU A LITTLE BIT OF BACKGROUND.

DEMOCRATS CONTROL THE SENATE, REPUBLICANS CONTROL THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. EACH CHAMBER HAS PASSED THEIR OWN, WHAT THEY CALL "PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS," BUT THERE ARE SOME PRETTY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO BILLS, SO NOW THEY'VE GOTTA WORK IT OUT TOGETHER, GET ONE BILL, PASS THAT, AND SEND IT TO THE PRESIDENT. THE SENATE VERSION PRESERVES STATES' RIGHTS TO PASS STRICTER BILLS IF THEY WANT TO, AND ALLOWS PATIENTS TO SUE THEIR HMOS FOR DECISIONS THAT COMPROMISE THE QUALITY OF THEIR CARE. THE HOUSE VERSION, WHICH IS ALSO SUPPORTED BY PRESIDENT BUSH, WOULD CREATE ONE UNIFORM SET OF LAWS FOR EVERY STATE, AND SEEK TO KEEP PREMIUMS DOWN BY PUTTING FINANCIAL LIMITS ON LAWSUITS.

MODERATOR—NOW THERE'S A LOT OF OTHER STUFF THAT'S IN THESE BILLS, BUT THESE ARE KIND OF THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SENATE VERSION AND THE HOUSE VERSION.

So the choice is lawyer, the person that is pro-lawyer and the person that's not pro-lawyer.

MODERATOR—WELL, THE FIRST VERSION, THE SENATE VERSION (REPEATS STATEMENT). THE HOUSE VERSION (REPEATS STATEMENT).

Okay, pro-lawyer and the anti-lawyer versions.

Except that I don't agree with that assessment, in that under both bills, the patients can sue the HMO. It's just in one version, the limit of the judgment is in tact. So the lawyer works either way.

(Many talking at once.)

Yeah, but who pays for it? That's the biggest thing. Every lawsuit, everything that you were sent in to your insurance company, lawsuit, you know, dealing with HMOs, hospitals, anything, the patient and other people always suffer for it.

I would say top-line, I think a lot of lawsuits out there really excess with the (inaudible). I think that, you know, you could still penalize somebody and cap it enough to at least stay pretty reasonable for the rest of us, so I got that point about the cap and that's it. Just as long as it was within a rational limit.

See, I disagree with that. I think there should be no cap, because if we had caps on certain lawsuits, tobacco companies wouldn't be capitulating to what the government wants them to do and changing their format of who they sell to and how they sell it to them. You know, if there was just a little hit every time they say, "well we'll sell one hundred thousand more cigarettes to pay for it and it's not being (inaudible)." But because there is no cap, it would make an HMO think twice about how they'd handle someone else's future in regards to what type of treatment they'd get, what type of testing they get, so I feel that I'd rather go with the Senate versus Bush and the House, because I really feel that part of the point of the lawsuit is to cause retribution for an error made, and to make sure it's not made again. For motor companies, sold cars, this is just an example, you know, they knew two people. And by my . . . it's cheaper to pay off the people who survived, versus you know, what it would cost if they had gone to lawsuits for everything, and change production. This is cheaper, so unless you can put no cap on it, you know, it's fine, okay we'll pay it, every time that someone comes up with this lawsuit. And I think they'd find a way to pay for it in the system, they'll do, you know, through extra billing or whatever.

Either way, it still it's still passed on to your consumers.

I just see this so transparently. I can't believe I can't even get my wife to necessarily see it this way. But this is going to bankrupt the HMOs, it's gonna break their backs. And there are gonna always be (inaudible) . . .

If there's not a cap.

Right, either way. This will . . .

If there's not a cap.

Cap or no cap, it's gonna . . . in the end, you're gonna end up bankrupting the HMOs, and if your true goal in your policy, no matter what, was to make sure we had the maximum number of people covered under private insurance companies, you are gonna end up putting more people on the no-insurance roles, creating more demand for the state to jump in, the federal government jump in, with the national health care system to take care of those people. And if I have the alternative of someone being in some health care, even by a bad HMO that may have acted irresponsibly a time or two, but covering a million people, I'll take the bad HMO even in that case rather than the federal government running it.

What you prefer is nationalized health then, because no . .

No, he's saying just the opposite. He'd not want nationalized health care. I would rather have even a bad HMO than to have the government running it.

Then we would have no Patients' Bill of Rights at all if I'm hearing you right, correct David?

I think you already have rights that are already there. Because I've had several family members go through and have the HMO to pay for a specialty cancer treatment or heart... seriously, and yeah, it's a fight. It's a bureaucratic (inaudible) fight, but you get it, and you know what, if they don't give it to you, the HMOs, there are legal grievances suits that can file against the HMO already. I think they're just creating a crisis again on this level. I think it's gonna end up screwing us all. I think HMOs will be bankrupt if this goes through in fifteen years.

Less.

MODERATOR—LETS IMAGINE, I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS GONNA HAPPEN OR NOT, WE'LL SAY HYPOTHETICALLY, THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE CAN'T GET TOGETHER ON THEIR BILL, THEY CAN'T WORK OUT THE DIFFERENCES, THE REST OF THE YEAR PASSES, CONGRESS GOES OUT OF SESSION, THEY ALL GO HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS, NO BILL . . . NO PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS GETS PASSED AT ALL. WHO'S TO BLAME?

Yes.

MODERATOR—YES?

Yes. That's about right.

Who's to blame?

There's no one person. The Congress, the people of the United States.

MODERATOR—WHY?

Because the Senate and Congress couldn't compromise and the people of the United States didn't force it.

I think it's a really good point, 'cause I don't see that many people in the United States forcing it.

No, I think we're pretty apathetic, even in here. I don't see anyone waving a flag on this one.

You get how many attorneys, and they're all attorneys, into one room. How many different opinions do you have?

One for each attorney.

No, you have more than one for each attorney. As many as you do lobbyists, you know, back to that lobbyist thing.

I think in this case, apathy might be our best friend. 'Cause that's not, I gathered, as much the experience with you, but I have experienced my family members in that experience as well, and they are challenging to go through. And there are lawsuits that are taken today. Somebody screws up, there are lawsuits that happen today, so I'm just not sure exactly how one is gonna . . . it's gonna change all that much. I don't know.

MODERATOR—OKAY, LET'S GO TO THE NEXT ONE. ONE MORE ISSUE. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU HEAR ABOUT BUSH AND THE FEDERAL BUDGET?

The federal government has a budget?

Hopefully there's a little more accountability here, hopefully. I'm hopeful that there's more accountability.

I think he's gotta bust baseline budgeting opening and expose it for what it is. That things just automatically take off on an upward increase perpetually. I think that's gonna be exposed under him.

I worry about a possible return to deficit spending. It may or may not happen, but I worry about it.

I've always worried about it. You know, it's just based on who is in charge of or who can get away with the spending. That's pretty much where it's going. If you're affected, the accountability of what you're gonna be doing, like what he's saying. No, I'm not too worried about the budget with Bush, about deficit spending, back to that or anything like that.

MODERATOR—WHERE ARE YOU WORRIED, JAMES?

I just . . . Deficit spending in the '80's was a policy that it increased our debt as a country, bad thing. Now we were having surpluses and we've all kind of reaped the benefits of that in our tax relief, and you know, I wonder if we're going to be able to keep the budget balanced and the . . . without wanting to get into gross moralities, but it seems like the Republican agenda, led by President Bush, tends to favor the idea that it's okay to spend more than you take in, historically.

As opposed to the Democratic party's Presidential and President, Congress and Senate policies for maybe 1930 to 1968, '70.

MODERATOR—LET'S TRY TO STAY FOCUSED ON BUSH. I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO, YOU KNOW . . .

I mean deficit spending. How do you think we got out of the Depression?

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT. LET'S GO AHEAD AND FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER FOUR THERE . . .

EARLIER THIS YEAR, PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESS PASSED A \$1.35 TRILLION TAX CUT OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS. BUSH SAYS HE PUSHED FOR THE BIGGEST TAX CUT IN HISTORY, BECAUSE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE OVERTAXED, AND WE NEED TO PROVIDE TAX RELIEF IN ORDER TO PRESERVE OUR COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC STRENGTH. DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS SUPPORT MANY OF THE TAX CUTS, INCLUDING MAKING COLLEGE TUITION DEDUCTIBLE AND ELIMINATING THE MARRIAGE PENALTY, BUT THEY SAY BUSH'S PLAN IS TOO BIG AND IRRESPONSIBLE, AND GIVES MOST OF THE TAX CUTS TO THE WEALTHIEST ONE PERCENT, THOSE MAKING OVER \$375,000.00 A YEAR.

I don't know about you guys, but I mean to me, that just seems kind of a shift of scale. I mean if you give anybody a tax cut out there, you know, I mean the scale's always gonna affect the wealthy to some degree. I mean you know, it's like you know, if you're making \$200,000 and the guy sitting next to you's making \$50,000, and you both get relief on the basis, it's gonna happen. I'm not a big fan of tiered taxing. I'd love to see our system just put down a flat tax or just a flat percentage at least. But I mean, it just seems like it's real easy to tax cut, and so as far as what the Democrats are saying, it just seems like more mud-slinging to me. I think there's some truth behind it, but I don't think it's from what they're complaining about, the 1 percent, that's not the core issue.

It's the tiered tax that creates this. Or this tax system itself that creates this inequity when you relieve taxes, it's the tax system itself. So, in order to stop this from happening, you go like you said, you go with a flat rate or something like that, so that when you do a tax relief, this doesn't happen.

Got so many talents on this.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS STATEMENT?

I think it bothers me because again it preys on people's total economic ignorance of not distinguishing the difference between percentage decline and absolute dollar decline.

MODERATOR—WHICH IS WHAT WE JUST TALKED ABOUT.

Yeah, right.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING ELSE THOUGH? ANYTHING ELSE THAT JUMPS OUT IN THIS STATEMENT BESIDES THAT?

Both sides are lying. Neither one is presenting the real truth.

And I guess one thing is, it's old politics. It's one guy, you know, creating something to make it . . . there's a thread of truth in it, but they amplify it and it's out of proportion unless you kind of know the issue, and then general (inaudible) can be convinced one way or another.

Right. I don't understand why the Democrats are really complaining, 'cause they're probably in that 1 percent.

Oh, they are.

So, what's their problem?

(Many talking at once.)

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO AHEAD AND FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER FIVE NOW . . .

- a. CANCEL THE RATE CUTS FOR THE WEALTHIEST ONE PERCENT TO INCREASE EDUCATION SPENDING BY 200 BILLION DOLLARS OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS.
- b. CANCEL THE RATE CUTS FOR THE WEALTHIEST ONE PERCENT TO CREATE A REAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT FOR ALL SENIORS.
- c. CANCEL THE RATE CUTS FOR THE WEALTHIEST ONE PERCENT TO FUND THE MODERNIZATION OF AMERICA'S MILITARY.
- d. CANCEL THE RATE CUTS FOR THE WEALTHIEST ONE PERCENT TO PREVENT BORROWING FROM THE MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUNDS.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, JUST A QUICK SHOW OF HANDS. A: +3'S? TWO. +2'S? +1'S? THREE. 0'S? -1'S? TWO. -2'S? TWO. -3'S? ONE. ALL RIGHT, TELL ME WHAT YOU GUYS THOUGHT OF THIS ONE. HOW ABOUT THE +1'S AND THE +3'S, THOSE OF YOU WHO SUPPORTED IT TO SOME DEGREE?

I'll start it off. I have two kids who will still be in school if this were implemented, that would probably benefit from it. But I have to say in the area we live in, probably they won't benefit

that much. It's probably gonna do more for the inner city or somebody else. So that's why . . . it's probably a good idea and I lean towards it. I was only a 1, it's not something I'm strongly for, because it will have less of an impact on me than other things.

I think it's an educational from a lot of different areas. You know, other than if you drop a lot of money into education, kids start learning more and more. That's gonna be our future, and a lot of the stuff that we'd be dumping money into in other areas, education's gonna catch up to it anyway and promote that.

My wife's a teacher, and I just absolutely am against giving more and more money to solve education problems. I think we've increased our education spending so much faster than in all other areas of government spending, and we now in this state, we spend fifty eight hundred dollars per pupil in the public education system, and I don't think the money gets to the classrooms, and you throw it, it goes to the unions, the bureaucracy, the administration . . .

MODERATOR—OKAY. WHO ELSE?

I just look at it in terms of, you know, bang for your buck. I think you get a lot more bang for your buck if you spend it over education, where you're spending for your future, as opposed to giving the 1 percent wealthiest a tax break who don't really benefit all that much by that tax break.

I like education, I think it's a good idea, I just disagree with this sort of Robin Hood mentality, and using this wealthiest 1 percent as a silver bullet. I think that we're just skirting the real issue and that's just the way that we're choosing to spend our money as a country. And I just don't agree with saying we're gonna nail the wealthiest people out there to pay for our shortfalls and organization elsewhere.

I agree.

And I'm also vague that the 200 dollars would be spent efficiently.

That permeates throughout all my four answers. It's like I just don't . . . I mean I'm either +1 or neutral or -1, I . . . this whole idea of . . .

I find I went -3 on all of them 'cause it's like you're trying to compensate for something that isn't right in the first place, so you know, that's not the problem, the problem is the way things are managed.

See, it's a novel concept, that's the problem, not the solution.

Yeah, it's just using band-aids.

MODERATOR—OKAY. NEXT ONE, B: ANY +3'S? +2'S? +1'S? THREE. 0'S? TWO. -1'S? ONE. -2'S? ONE. -3'S? TWO. OKAY, LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS ONE. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS?

I think the fundamental problem is that the pharmaceutical companies are getting . . . raking in profits and (inaudible) people who can't afford to pay the high prices for medications. And people who are on fixed incomes have a serious problem.

I think of all the generic drugs after they come off patent that are inexpensive and available because these pharmaceuticals, these evil pharmaceuticals are this great laboratory. The greatest laboratory at all is the free market, which is going after profits. And evil as those might be, that's what makes the new drugs come out. I don't want the government to have anything to do with that mechanism. I think that mechanism's what continues to bring us the miracle drugs. And I don't wanna kill the golden goose.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WHO ELSE?

For my part, I'd say that it's enormously expensive to develop a drug. You know, if you look at what some of these guys are put through to get something approved. You know, generally it takes them years to make back the money they spent on it, so I think the issue's still the same one, it's a silver bullet.

Well, it's the issue of the hoops they have to go through to get approval to market, or the...

Yeah, actually, the issue is the drug prescription benefit for all seniors. I mean, I really don't have a serious problem with that.

(Many talking at once.)

You know, it's like, that's not really the issue. The issue is once again taking the money from the wealthiest 1 percent out there to pay for it. If it's a worthy cause, let's work it into the rest of our spending, let's not just find a . . . (inaudible) measures.

MODERATOR—OKAY. NEXT ONE, C: +3'S? +2'S? +1'S? THREE. 0'S? TWO. -1'S? TWO. -2'S? ONE. -3'S? TWO. ALL RIGHT. TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK OF THIS ONE.

Promote education and you'll build up your military.

When kids are smarter, you're gonna have better military stuff anyway.

So, it seems kind of odd to have the wealthiest 1 percent fund the nation's military. I don't know.

Maybe they'll get (inaudible, many talking at once).

It's probably not enough to fund it anyways.

A couple hundred million dollars, you know.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, LAST ONE, D: +3'S? +2'S? +1'S? SIX. 0'S? -1'S? -2'S? -3'S? ONE. WE GOT EIGHT GUYS ON THE PLUS SIDE, WHAT'S UP?

Borrowing from Medicare and Social Security trust funds is a bad thing in general.

Also too, I look at it as the Robin Hood mentality, you're taking from the wealthy and giving it to the people who need it most, almost in measure. You know, the wealthy are the ones who have to carry the people who need it, one way or another, whether it's a tax cut directly related or one way or another, they're gonna be paying for it.

MODERATOR—IF THESE TAX CUTS ARE GONNA CAUSE THEM TO BORROW MONEY FROM THE MEDICARE AND THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUNDS, WOULD YOU STILL SUPPORT THE TAX CUTS?

Yes, and I'd tell them to fund the money from the budget.

Nobody's saying it's gonna cause them (inaudible, many talking at once).

Assuming it is correct, the budget (inaudible).

I was negative about every one of these, this was the only one I went +1 on, and I'm totally with the idea, I don't wanna take the . . . that's a fiduciary obligation, that we set forth with the Medicare and Social Security Plan, and I don't think you screw it. Even though I myself and probably every one of my friends my age doesn't dream that they'll get a dime of their Social Security, I know my mom does, and I think you don't screw with it, but you do what you have to do, make its fiduciary obligation come through.

And see, I softened my stance on this one a little bit too, 'cause I liked the issue more on a personal level than I did on the others. But that being said, you know, like I said, I still think it's right. I think that if you're gonna do it for one of the four, this might be the best one. But it's still a cheap way to get there. That being said, we've been fighting this issue for a long time, and we haven't gotten anywhere with it. So you know, the cynical side of me would argue that maybe this is the only way we can get there. I still disagree with going that route.

MODERATOR—LET'S SET ASIDE THE OBJECTIONS TO WHAT YOU CALL THE ROBIN HOOD MENTALITY, AND USING THE ONE PERCENT. BUT LET'S SAY WE'VE GOT FOUR IDEAS OF WHERE TO SPEND MONEY HERE, WE'VE GOT EDUCATION SPENDING, PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FOR SENIORS, MODERNIZING THE MILITARY, AND PROTECTING MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUNDS. IF YOU HAD THOSE FOUR, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PRIORITY? HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD SAY EDUCATION? FIVE. HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD SAY PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FOR SENIORS? ZERO. MILITARY? ZERO. PROTECT MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUNDS? FIVE. ALL RIGHT, FIVE AND FIVE.

Educate the kids, it'll fix the other stuff. Educate your own kids, give me my (inaudible).

You have a hard time disagreeing with him on it too, don't you?

I think what it all boils down to, if we were managing the money to the Medicare and Social Security, as if we were managing our own finances at home, you could not get away with doing them so the federal government's not (inaudible).

Well, if they would manage everything, you know, if they would be able to balance a checkbook, when we go negative, we get . . .

We get dinged.

Right.

They go negative, we get dinged.

Right, so exactly. They go negative, we get dinged.

Now I know why I'm on neutral and +1, it's just like . . .

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, SO THINKING ABOUT THIS BUSH TAX CUT, RIGHT, WE TALKED ABOUT IT, BUSH SAYS IT'S NECESSARY, IT'S GONNA STIMULATE THE ECONOMY, (INAUDIBLE) GONNA SAY IT'S TOO BIG, AND IT PREVENTS US FROM SPENDING MONEY ON ALL THESE THINGS THAT NEED IT MORE. WHAT DO YOU THINK? WHERE DO YOU FALL IN THIS ARGUMENT?

Well, I think it's gonna be hard to gauge whether or not it will affect the economy without being Greenspan lowering the lending rate by a quarter of a point today, you know. With factors like that coming into it, yeah, the money's gonna come in, some people are gonna pay bills, and it will work its way back into the economy. But as far as direct result, economics is such a gray area, you can build statistics to say that you did whatever you wanted.

You can't probably cause it to blink.

I'd rather be in control of my own money than have it be in control with somebody else. I know how . . . the direction I wanna use my spending money, savings, stocks, whatever it is, and I'm gonna control my money or my future and everything myself. I feel much more comfortable with that.

You understanding you've made a mistake, you know with what?

That's correct. I think the government's proven themselves to be ineffective in dealing with funds. I mean, that's why we've got the issues with Medicare and Social Security, and with quite a few other issues you're talking about here. Whereas, you know, in general, people have shown that they can actually create value with the money when they have it in their own hands. And it's hard to decide the tax cut, and just trust that the same issues are gonna be there

regardless, and we're still gonna have to face them. We're gonna have it just as easy without the extra cash.

MODERATOR— OKAY. GO AHEAD AND FLIP TO HANDOUT SIX. THIS IS THE LAST THING. (POSTCARD TO GEORGE BUSH) . . . THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE DONE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

(end of session)