

**DEMOCRACY CORPS  
GROUP 2  
APPLETON, WI  
MEN, AGES 45-60, NON-COLLEGE,  
HOUSEHOLD INCOME UNDER \$50K, WEAK PARTISANS  
JUNE 29, 2005, 8:15 PM**

(Both tapes start mid group)

That boom was never going to bust and ultimately what comes up has to come down. Whether it's cyclical or the war, or whatever. I think people are just getting prepared for it.

I think we're basically selling our whole country out to foreigners and what is our national debt now? 8 trillion maybe? And who holds that debt? Our government just doesn't live within its means. Everybody else is supposed to, but they don't. They just keep pissing money away and somebody else is going to pay for that. We'd probably owe a lot more if we figure in our social security that's been pissed away too and taken. Soon we're going to have a huge group of baby boomers retiring. And what are they going to do with their investments? They're probably going to start pulling stuff out of the stock market. That's why I think Bush wants to privatize a portion of social security, to get more in. Plus just like with immigration, I think they're letting more and more people in to create more jobs, more homes. To keep the economy at home going. It's a lot of stupid stuff. China, Japan, its going to go further and further that way.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT JOHN IS SAYING?

I think the most telling things in recent history is when private citizens attempted to do the government's job that they should be doing and then they turn vigilantes. I think that's a very telling terminology to show the arrogance and I would say simple mismanagement of the government. The recent incident of guarding the Arizona border by private citizens I think was a very telling episode in this country.

MODERATOR—ANYONE ELSE?

I would say like the Mexican population that's come up here they're actually are taking some of the jobs that a lot of the people our age or even younger ones, wouldn't take. So in some areas I don't see anything wrong with it. (Inaudible) we were working by today, a Mexican fellow pulled in, he looking for guy who run the place. He's going around and said there's a lot of people who won't take even the six, seven dollar jobs.

You want a roofer, get a Mexican. You get it for half price.

Even kids in seventh, eighth grade or even high school. They don't want to do it for those kinds of prices. So if they're willing to take those jobs its good to. At least somebody is doing it.

**MODERATOR—LET'S TALK ABOUT THE SITUATION IN IRAQ A LITTLE BIT. NOT WHETHER WE SHOULD HAVE GONE OR SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT GIVEN WHERE WE ARE TODAY, WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS WITH THE SITUATION IN IRAQ?**

I don't think they had a clue the insurgency was going to be what it is. I don't think they had any idea whatsoever. I think they kind of went in blind.

I think the media only shows the bad. I don't think they show any of the good, at least the media I watch. I firmly believe there's a lot of bad, but I also believe there's probably a lot of good. And unfortunately you don't get to see that part.

It's interesting that the party that's not in political power sees it as the drum to beat. It's an easy target. You know? Guys dying. Its easy political hate a make to pound on it like they are. Look at most situations, it's a loin fruit. But as you say, it's not the truth. We're not getting the real stuff.

**MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK?**

I think it's worse than even we're hearing.

**MODERATOR—HOW SO?**

It seems the US has been, at least in my lifetime growing up in the 60's we were considered the imperialists trying to help out all over the world with our little police actions and whatnot. And W had his little agenda for whatever reasons, got us in this Iraq thing. And I firmly believe he's done nothing to make us more secure here. And if anything he's galvanized all these Islamic extremists around the world to the point that the imperialists occupying war dogs again. I think we're a bigger enemy now in the world. These people feel they've lived through their own version of oppression and now the United States is putting a thumb on it. I think he's doing irreparable harm globally. There's flag burnings everyday. It's seemed like for a while through some of our political waxings and weanings we were making friends around the world again. I think we've lost all that and its spiraling down.

I talked to a guy that was going to Iraq two weeks ago for the third time. He's been there since 2003 or 2002. He works for the contractor building, rebuilding. He was saying there's so many people becoming billionaires from Americans that are working over there. That are doing the construction and stuff and half the time they're being guarded by the army, which I don't know if that made him feel too safe. Because I don't know, like I said, I don't think they have any idea that this insurgency was going to be what it is.

MODERATOR—WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? ARE THINGS GETTING BETTER IN IRAQ? IF WE CONTINUE DOWN THE ROAD THAT WE'RE GOING, ARE WE GOING TO GET TO WHERE WE WANT TO BE? MARK, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I think we should get our troops out of there personally. We're taking over the country. They've got supposedly new power, new government in there. Let them deal with it.

I think it's going to take some time training the Iraqis to takeover, but I think this isn't a problem that's just isolated to Iraq. Its Pakistan, its Europe, they have cells in Britain. And then they jump out of the bush, hit you and disappear. It's pretty hard to defend that while going up against a recon squad. I think this could continue for 15, 20 years and I don't think you'd see much difference.

MODERATOR—OTHER THOUGHTS? WHERE WE GO FROM HERE?

I think we should probably get out as soon as we can, but give them the resources to hold the country.

MODERATOR—IT SOUNDS LIKE MOST PEOPLE SAY, LET'S GET OUT AS SOON AS WE CAN. BUT WHAT DO WE NEED TO ACCOMPLISH BEFORE WE CAN GET OUT? SHOULD WE START PULLING TODAY? ARE THERE CERTAIN POINTS THAT WE NEED TO GET BEFORE WE PULLOUT? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I think I would have a lot better clue on answering that, like he said, if you knew the whole story. What's getting rebuilt? What's actually changing in the government? If you knew all those things, they don't say anything about that. It's like this is what we've got to do, but they don't tell you what they're actually doing in that area. They said all you see on TV is another one blown up or whatever. You don't actually see what's getting rebuilt. You only see the part telling you, how many more times can they keep blowing up everything?

There can't be much left.

We don't see the total bill either.

Right.

They've been fighting over there for how many years and it ain't going to stop. They have the bombers and whatever, the suicide bombers.

I think we forget that World War I we rebuilt Europe and World War II we rebuilt Europe. And the countries that we go and defend, we end rebuilding them. We're going to stay the course I would hope until the insurgents I would assume, are hoping America pulls out and to get a timetable on that. That's maybe what they're looking for. I don't

know. But every war is a war of casualty and destruction. It's unfortunate. It's a fact of war. Whether we need to go there, as much as I defend our president, I still question that decision. But I think that three airplanes that were flown, hijacked, kidnapped, and people killed, and buildings taken down, I think it was a wake-up call for America. And while we may be hated around the world, people still die to come here. People still want to come here. People give up their lives to come here. There must be a reason for that.

I think its important that the US make an example in Iraq of our resolve so that other Islamic nations, like Iran for example, they're talking about nuclear weapons, if they see us cut and run in Iraq, that's just going to (inaudible) them to take the stage. Rather than stay, let everybody know, mess with us, you're going to pay.

**MODERATOR—MY QUESTION REMAINS, WHAT POINT DO WE HAVE TO GET TO BEFORE WE CAN BRING TROOPS HOME?**

When the Iraqi government can defend itself against the insurgents successfully.

Self sufficiency that allows them to do what Carl said, but we also need to assure that there's an infrastructure that allows them to maintain a positive direction as far as their production and factories, getting water to all the people. There's a lot of the infrastructure that had been neglected before, plus there's a lot that has been destroyed since we first went over there. And I think the average person over there, it's my feeling about not having been there, I guess I can only believe that most people over there are just like any one of us. Trying to live a life, trying to have a family, take care of their family, feed their kids and obviously that was not possible before to the level that any of them wanted. But now there's an opportunity that maybe they can go in that direction. However, they have to have some type of infrastructure; they have to have a self sufficient government. I think some of that is happening and has been happening. But I think that at the moment in time when we do pullout to me has to be real subjective at this time. I would love to have everybody come home, but I don't think that's the practical solution.

**MODERATOR—(INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN ON WORD ASSOCIATION EXERCISE)  
BILL CLINTON.**

Fun guy.

Damaging.

Shame.

Disappointing.

Smart.

I was going to say intelligent. With all those other things, but still intelligent.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE, BILL CLINTON?

Professional politician.

He faced the office.

MODERATOR—UNITED NATIONS.

Scam.

Ineffective.

The what? The un-United Nations. A lot of special interests.

Play doe. No balls to do what needs to be done.

Self destructive.

Outdated.

MODERATOR—TOM DELAY?

Deserves it.

(Inaudible)

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE?

Just one more guy getting caught, or the other seven did.

Easy target.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING ELSE? ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR YOU ASSOCIATE WITH DELAY, WHAT HE'S DONE, WHY HE'S A TARGET?

He's powerful. That might be why he's an easy target.

MODERATOR—ANYONE ELSE?

I don't even know who Tom Delay is.

MODERATOR—THAT'S FINE. RUDY GULIANI.

Diverse.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU?

Presidential.

Handles the press well.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING ELSE?

Common sense solutions to city problems.

(Inaudible)

Tells it like it is.

Non polarizing.

Hmm.

The comeback kid.

MODERATOR—THE NRA.

Marketing.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF THE NRA?

Pushy.

National Riffle Association.

My way is the only way. I used to belong. I gave it up. Too pushy for me.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU?

Is it all right to ask a question?

MODERATOR—I DON'T WANT TO GET TOO FAR OFF TRACK.

I don't know enough about it to know why it's that way.

MODERATOR—THAT'S OKAY. HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE OR HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF THE NRA? ONE.

I got a free sticker and cut the eagle off and put it on my truck.

They have good stickers.

I hung up on a guy soliciting.

**MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS?**

Some are trying to protect the environment against people. Sometimes don't want to protect it and sometimes do because they want to drill for oil. They want to protect it, but I don't think anybody knows why.

**MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS?**

On a local level I think they're doing a pretty good job. We do a lot of outdoors stuff, camping and stuff and you just, I've been doing it since I was a kid, and you just notice things that have really changed for the good. Bald eagles, 15, 20 years ago you didn't see it. Where I go camping they camp right above our tree. You didn't see that 20 years ago. Even locally, ducks and everything else. You just didn't see it. But they're doing something right. I just don't know what group it's actually attached to.

They're calling attention to the right issue.

(Many talking at once)

There are a lot of other things that have disappeared also.

They're thinking about bringing that back.

D.E.K.?

Too many egos.

I can imagine they have good, but I can believe they're really intrusive.

**MODERATOR—ANYTHING ELSE?**

I think with the corruption of government they're a necessary evil.

**MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT MAJOR CORPORATIONS?**

They're running the country.

Necessary evils.

They don't have accountability. They should send them to prison and burn them at the stake.

Well are you picking any in particular?

MODERATOR—NO. JUST WHAT YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU HEAR MAJOR CORPORATIONS.

Greed.

Greed.

Yeah.

Needed overpaid executives.

Not worried about the worker.

Well, I think it's the shareholder that isn't really worried about the worker. Because they want a return. If they don't, they get out. You know? So companies have to do what they do. Unfortunately they're not only (inaudible) everybody else, they're taking big paychecks. There should be some accountability.

Shareholders aren't going to.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT LABOR UNIONS?

I think they had their time.

Wandering.

Supply and demand.

I think companies got too big for them.

MODERATOR—COMPANIES ARE JUST TOO POWERFUL FOR THE UNIONS NOW?

There's too many (inaudible) too.

You do it their way or they go to Mexico or China. And NAFTA, they have to, I mean.

MODERATOR—ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ON UNIONS?

I've never been in the union and neither has my wife, but she just got hooked up with a teaching job in the public schools. And she had worked in a parochial school before this

at the catholic middle school here in town. Getting a job offer, she's going to be starting this fall at a public school, she did her contract stuff two days ago. Its amazing, if [WEAC], WEAC is the teachers union, to what extent they're responsible for these little packages we get together, this was fully 30 percent plus what she's got masters degrees and getting the top dollar for her position. Between parochial or private sector lets say, and the unionized teaching, which is public schools, she was amazed. She had no idea that this was, she didn't do it for the money, she did it to get closer to home. But the union had this little package for her position, which was. . .

Nice.

Nice, it was way above what she expected. So whether that's part of the union or if it's the school system itself that's trying to get the quality of education to give these better salaries and stuff. If it's the union, I guess on that context, it's effective. They're actually paying a living wage.

MODERATOR—JOHN KERRY. FIRST THING YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF KERRY.

Runner-up.

He doesn't drive SUV's. His family does. That's the first thing I think of every time I think of him.

I think he blew it.

Too indecisive.

Handicapped by others.

MODERATOR—WHO?

His wife first of all and those surrounding him.

I think he's got an inappropriate personality for the position he was going for.

MODERATOR—HOW SO?

He had too much arrogance and wanted to come across like he knew what he was doing, but it was very shallow, very transparent. What I saw from him anyhow.

Another professional politician. From a very early age. When I was a student I knew John Kerry from his standing up at congress and doing his anti war thing after coming back from Nam and he made a big impact on some of us that were out in the streets with similar thoughts.

MODERATOR—PASS THE AROUND. (INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN ON HANDOUTS #1 AND #2) WHAT ARE THE GOOD THINGS THAT COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF GEORGE W. BUSH?

I think he's a great husband and a great father.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE?

Sincerity.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

He means what he says.

Stable and predictable.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE?

He takes some hard positions.

One of the best moral leaders I believe we've had.

MODERATOR—HOW SO? HOW IS HE A GOOD MORAL LEADER?

He stays the course on the life issues. They show him in church. They show that end of it and he portrays it that he actually really believes in the background of our country and that's the way it should stay. He doesn't give up on those beliefs.

MODERATOR—OTHER POSITIVES ON BUSH?

My mind is a complete blank. I dug pretty deep too.

Patriotic.

MODERATOR—OTHER POSITIVES ON BUSH.

He's determined, he's right. Maybe that's for the other page. I don't know. He's determined.

He's certain of his convictions.

Yes.

He will pull the trigger.

He's more presidential than I ever imagined he was going to be in the beginning. I thought he was going to be fumbling around for the first three years of his first four year term, but I think he stepped up and impressed me as being presidential in a very short time.

I think 9/11 forced him to become presidential.

Hmm.

He's had a full plate. The economy and the war, 9/11.

**MODERATOR—HANDOUT 2. WHAT NEGATIVES DO YOU HAVE?**

Pork barrel spending.

I wonder if he's willing to listen to his party.

**MODERATOR—DOUBTS ABOUT BUSH.**

I don't think he's very intelligent.

I have doubts that he truly cares for the average citizen. Too swayed by big corporations and special interest groups. Although I do appreciate very much his moral convictions, I do also believe that he comes across as too religious and that causes some animosity.

**MODERATOR—OTHER DOUBTS.**

I think he doesn't look at the total issues or the situation, or the aftermath of what occurs from his actions.

I'm glad he wasn't around during the Cuban missile crisis.

Yeah, really.

(Inaudible)

I don't sense that he can stand alone. I mean we're giving him all this credit, but I think without his little political machine that's doing his spinning; he'd be down like a house of cards.

**MODERATOR—OTHERS?**

Running puppet.

I didn't care for him lying to us to war. I like the idea of doing what needed to be done, but the way he did it.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING ELSE?

I didn't care for the way he hired Cheney's corporations to go into Iraq without putting that bid out for other construction. I also don't care for the gas prices and knowing he's an oil man.

My neighbor's son just got back from Iraq and it hit the (inaudible) when we were talking about Iraq and specifically before. But he was assigned with part of this battalion to protect the Halliburton guys that they're doing there when they're doing their runs and setting up their kitchens and stuff. And he was making 1800 bucks a month and these guys were making 15,000 a month that he was protecting. He thought that was strangely ironic. From a soldier's standpoint he was protecting American interests, but the disparity of economics in his mind are not realistic.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE PARTIES. FLIP TO HANDOUT #3 (INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN) WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT DEMOCRATS?

They seem to be more for the working class.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE?

They initiate change and progress.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR YOU COULD POINT TO?

I guess its, rather than any particular topic, its how they question that status quo and challenge republican minds to be a little bit more open. Act in a way that's more beneficial to the average person. John Q. public.

I like healthcare. They've been trying to push healthcare through years ago. At least they were talking about it.

They have better checks and balances on money issues. Right now you don't know what direction it's headed except for way up or way down. Nothing in between.

MODERATOR—OTHER POSITIVES?

They seem a tad less bipartisan. If I catch any of the drift about what's happening on both sides of the isle in Washington, it seems like the democrats in most cases are more willing to bend to the things that are closer to their agenda. In other words, republicans are staying more staunchly.

I think they seem more dedicated to the issues of the party as a whole overall.

MODERATOR—AGAIN, ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT?

No. Just in general.

**MODERATOR—WHAT DO DEMOCRATS GET WRONG?**

There seems to be a little bit of a problem with the party unity. There's a little internal descent. It doesn't help their cause.

They seem mean spirited. I think of Howard Dean.

To me they appear weak because they're constantly on the defensive. And they choose inappropriate candidates for president.

I think they would have a chance of winning if they weren't fighting amongst themselves.

Right.

**MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE?**

Quit criticizing so much and have a little bit more of your own direction. Whether its right or wrong, pick a direction and go.

Be on the offense instead of the defense.

I feel like they're morally bankrupt.

**MODERATOR—WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?**

Well, and that's coming from a guy who has a homosexual twin and a lesbian sister. So those issues are close to home to me, but it sees like everything is so diversive. Everybody should have, I think of same sex marriage and the issues that surround that, how I feel that that will just drive a wedge, really do more damage than a lot of things that are here in America. They support and have always supported those types of causes.

**MODERATOR—ANYONE ELSE ON THE ISSUE OF MORAL VALUES? DO YOU FEEL THAT DEMOCRATS ARE WEAK ON THAT OR DO THEY GET IT WRONG ON THOSE ISSUES?**

Weak.

**MODERATOR—HOW SO?**

They're trying to please a lot of different people and groups. You know like homosexuals and so on. I think it's more of a problem and it should be treated or understood, but not embraced necessarily. I don't know. It's just like abortions, who wants abortions, but they should be available in some instances. So I don't know.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE DO DEMOCRATS GET WRONG.

(Inaudible).org and activities taken underway by them.

MODERATOR—WHAT ABOUT THEM?

Some of the ads they, I don't remember the exacts of the ad, but during the Bush/Kerry campaign, there were some anti Bush ads that were very attack oriented. Not that the republicans are innocent, but that was a very vengeful or below the belt ad.

The last two weeks of it, it was bad. It was the same thing over and over. It's like they never said what they were going to do, its like, what he did.

Not what they're going to do different, just attack.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING ELSE? FLIP TO HANDOUT #4 (INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN) WHAT DID THE REPUBLICANS GET RIGHT?

I wrote, they seem to win a lot of elections.

That's what I did too. They have the majority of the seats. They seem very organized.

Better party unity. They kind of seem to be on the same page instead of fighting amongst themselves.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE?

They're probably a little stronger on their positions. If they're lying or not, they pretty much stay the course of what they're talking about. If you agree with it or not, at least you kind of know where they're coming from instead of just waiting for the other guy to say what he thinks. And oh, gee we were going to do it like this.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE DID THE REPUBLICANS GET RIGHT?

I think they all read the memos.

MODERATOR—AGAIN THE IDEA OF UNITY.

Their lines of communication between the party (inaudible).

They're not on the defensive like the democrats seem to be all the time. They come from a position of strength and unity, and morality. Higher morality.

MODERATOR—DO THE REST OF YOU AGREE WITH THAT? REPUBLICANS ARE STRONGER ON MORALS OR MORALITY?

I don't know if they're any stronger than the democrats, but to me they are willing to express that they're stronger than the democrats. Whether they end up being that way is maybe not true, but I'd like to hope they were.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING ELSE?

Pro education.

MODERATOR—WHAT DID THEY GET WRONG?

I think this whole moral high road is a political ploy. Keeping up with the religious right, all that stuff, it was all part of the. . .

Part of the plan.

Part of the plan.

Hmm.

Well thought out.

The rich.

I think what the democrats have got to do is they've got to connect with the Hispanics, the minorities. I mean if blacks and Hispanics would vote, lookout. And that will happen someday soon.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE DO REPUBLICANS GET WRONG?

I think they have more dirty politicking. I think they stick together no matter what. Even if they're lying about it. They don't care if they're lying, but they're going to stick together anyway.

I think the big business influence big time.

The rich get richer.

MODERATOR—ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES WHERE YOU SEE THAT THEY'RE PARTICULARLY TOO CLOSE TO BIG BUSINESS?

Just about everything. Just about everything relating to promoting big business and lending to the security of big business at the expense of the average citizens. I think that's the thing I dislike the most about the Republican Party.

I mean there's not a democrat that's going to get elected without having big business influence. It's impossible. It would cost too much. The republicans seem to, they all seem to kind of want to sleep together.

Their good old boy network is a lot stronger. Democrats have some of the good old boy network, but a lot of those are kind of looney guys that are still there, but you shake your head when they talk.

**MODERATOR—RICHARD, WHAT DID YOU HAVE?**

I said they often don't connect with the average citizen in the long run, although they portray that very issue.

**MODERATOR—OTHER THINGS REPUBLICANS GET WRONG.**

Possibly not as accountable for spending. It seems like the pocket's never empty. The bank gets a lot emptier every time they write out a check.

In order to boost the economy they usually give grants and things to business people in order to get it going.

**MODERATOR—BOB RAISED AN INTERESTING POINT. HISTORICALLY DEMOCRATS WERE ALWAYS THE PARTY YOU THOUGHT OF AS LIKE TAX AND SPEND. HIGH TAXES, HIGH GOVERNMENT SPENDING. BOB IS SAYING THAT NOW REPUBLICANS ARE SPENDING EVERY BIT AS MUCH AS DEMOCRATS, IF NOT MORE.**

But they're spending at the higher level I think. Democrats tend to spend, but they spend more for human interest type programs. The spending that's done by the republicans, my perception is that's all going to the top to the big business, to the good old boy network, anybody that's plugged in with a republican and has been a buddy of theirs for years is going to get some.

You keep hoping it's going to trickle down to you, but. . .

It never does. At least with the democrats it does trickle done.

And just Halliburton. Halliburton is in financing.

**MODERATOR—DO YOU AGREE THAT THERE REALLY ISN'T MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS IN TERMS OF HOW MUCH THEY SPEND; IT'S JUST WHERE THEY SPEND IT?**

Yeah.

It bothers me that they put so much money in electric cars and putting a lot of research into the hydrogen vehicles and you find out that the hydrogen vehicle will take just as much or more of fossil fuel in order to create the hydrogen fuel cells.

That's why you need nuclear. They better get going with it, because if we're tied into oil, we're in deep shit when China gets going. Three dollars a gallon, huh, you'll be lucky if you get it for six dollars a gallon. And when that starts happening, then we're in real deep shit. We should start pumping oil out of Alaska, and start spending big money on getting hydrogen cars going or. . .

I think that we're kidding ourselves. We have parking lots full of SUV's that one person rides. Gas is \$2.30 a gallon. In Europe its five and six dollars a gallon, but their transportation system is tops.

Their country is like a (inaudible).

Their cars get 50 miles to the gallon and yet we insist we're going to drive ourselves, not carpool, have big SUV's, gas guzzlers, and then we wonder where the oil goes.

I would have carpoled with you.

I wish I'd have known.

MODERATOR—(EXPLANATION OF REPUBLICAN CONTROL)

That's true also in the state of Wisconsin now?

MODERATOR—FOR?

The house and the assembly.

MODERATOR—REPUBLICAN CONTROL?

Yes.

MODERATOR—RIGHT, BUT THEY'VE GOT DOYLE IN THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION, SO IT'S A LITTLE DIFFERENT.

I see what you're saying.

MODERATOR—BASICALLY THEY'RE IN A POSITION IN WASHINGTON WHERE THEY HAVEN'T BEEN IN BEFORE. GIVEN THIS POSITION, ARE YOU MORE WORRIED ABOUT DEMOCRATS BASICALLY BECOMING THE OBSTRUCTIONISTS NOW AND BLOCKING REPUBLICANS FROM ACCOMPLISHING THE THINGS THEY WERE ELECTED TO ACCOMPLISH? OR ARE YOU MORE WORRIED ABOUT REPUBLICANS GOING TOO FAR NOW

THAT THEY CONTROL EVERYTHING AND MAY BE DOING THINGS THAT ARE CONTRARY TO THE BETTER INTEREST OF THE COUNTRY?

I don't remember what they said they were going to accomplish. All I can remember is what the democrats are doing wrong. I don't remember any positive, any things that they were going to accomplish. I'm not worried about it, because I don't think they have a direction. I think they're reactionary.

I think they have a very strong direction, it's just that its big business. I think they're keeping all of their promises, but not to us, they're keeping them to their buddies. And yeah, I do think that it's runaway and will continue to be that way.

MODERATOR—AGAIN, ANY SPECIFIC THINGS THAT YOU CAN POINT TO? ANY PLACE WHERE THEY'VE GONE TOO FAR?

I think just in general. Nothing is coming to mind right now. If I sat and thought about it for a while I'd probably come up with half a dozen topics. But nothing is coming to mind right now.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU? ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT DEMOCRATS BEING OBSTRUCTIONISTS OR ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT THE REPUBLICANS GOING TOO FAR?

Both.

MODERATOR—BOTH?

Yeah.

MODERATOR—HOW SO?

Very little will probably get done. I don't know. I think that in order for the democrats to look better, they've got to make the republicans look worse. And yet they don't really have a plan themselves. The republicans you know, they're going to try to get as much as they can, which we're not going to like that either.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK?

I feel that the republicans are grabbing handfuls right off the top routinely. Consistently. Not if they can. And being kind of a fan of anything that causes trouble anyway. I'd like to see the democrats just be obstructionists at this point and say, hey. Shine the light back on them and maybe shift some of these voters and the way people think about what's acceptable and what isn't in Washington anymore. It's just totally out of control.

I'm out of touch with the political system.

I don't think it's possible for the republicans to control as much as we think they can. Even though they have the white house, the house and the senate. And it's because it still takes the majority of votes. They still can filibuster. It was evident with the judges. They almost shutdown the government because of it. And frankly, this has not happened for a long time. So what was happening before? When the democrats, when they controlled the house, the senate and the white houses, everybody was probably saying the opposite. Now the republicans have to be obstructionists. So it's a cyclical thing in my opinion and the republicans don't have the power that we think they have.

The advent of the 24 hour news channel and the sound bite. Whatever is said now carries a lot farther than it did back in the 60's or whenever the democrats were in power. So it seemed like the highs and lows weren't as high and low as they are today. Its much more polarized today because of the vitreal is so high because of the sound bite.

MODERATOR—(INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN ON HANDOUT #5 AND READ ALOUD)  
HOW MANY PEOPLE GO WITH THE TOP ONE? 3. AND THE BOTTOM? 7. 7  
OF THE 10 OF YOU WENT WITH THE BOTTOM ONE, WHY DOES THAT MORE  
CLOSELY REFLECT WHAT YOU SEE?

Well it says with more Americans holding jobs, there's more Americans. And they're all holding two and three jobs to make a living.

Hmm.

You know? People that 20 years ago were making 10 dollars an hour are probably now making two jobs at 8 dollar an hour to try to keep up. I don't know who's paying for all these houses that are going up either. Because nobody I know is building them.

MODERATOR—RICHARD, GO AHEAD.

I think that the service industry so far is absorbing, although in a mediocre way, many of the manufacturing jobs, but I think that will quickly fill up the capacity and then it will be (inaudible). Income loss.

And what Larry said about we're working for a certain rate.

That's still a job, but they're not making as much.

(Inaudible) by the service industry, but that will quickly fill up too, next.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE ON THE BOTTOM ONE?

For example, if I just look at (inaudible). I can see three major businesses that used to be there. Simmons, they left. [Teoff] enterprises, they left. And not coming back. Borden's left two years ago. About all they have to replace it [Orett] Lumber and they're

getting moneys from the government in order to build. But it's a different kind of work. A lot of the people that did the other jobs no longer are useful.

MODERATOR—WHO ELSE?

The whole country is living on a credit card. So what do we expect our politicians to do with the national debt? Records is just realistic. They're living beyond their means.

Hilshire used to have 520 employees, now they're down to 260.

Unfortunately not too many of those employees saved any money.

MODERATOR—THE THREE OF YOU THAT WENT WITH THE TOP ONE, WHY IS THAT ONE MORE FOR YOU?

It wasn't, you had to pick one or the other. If you combine the two it would be a little more realistic because it's not all increased growth, but there are, in my line of work anyway, it seems to be plenty of stuff to be done, more rural and stuff like that. I know a lot of guys that are at least trying other things instead of just waiting for the factories.

I'm afraid I'm more of an optimist than a pessimist. So I guess if I could have, I would have liked to, obviously we couldn't by combining some of those two, but you know the interest rates are still low, people are still building. People are still buying. How they're building those million dollar homes, I agree with you Larry, it baffles me. . .

(end of side)

It seems like again, it's another cyclical thing. I hate to keep going back to that, but there are down times, there's up times. And John, you hit it right on the head, for some reasons Americans decided not to save. We were lousy saving as a country, but I still think as long as we keep moving forward, things will continue to, maybe not get great, but I don't know about job scarce. It seems like when I'm out of a job I can go get one. And maybe it's because of the line of business I'm in, I don't know.

MODERATOR—THIS TOP ONE SAYS, OUR CURRENT ECONOMIC POLICIES HAVE US ON THE ROAD TO INCREASED GROWTH AND PROSPERITY. DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT? WE'VE BASICALLY GOT THE RIGHT UNDERPINNINGS THERE AND WE JUST NEED TO FOLLOW THE CURRENT COURSE TO GET TO INCREASED GROWTH? OR DO YOU THINK WE NEED TO CHANGE SOMETHING ABOUT OUR CURRENT POLICIES?

I think the policies of entitlement that we've all been programmed with. You know? What are we entitled to? That mindset has got to change for our economy to continue

growing. Right now today we're not on the downhill yet, but when we're all retiring and we're all getting our entitlements.

I'm old enough, barely; to remember President Kennedy's inauguration speech and I think the famous line in that speech was, ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country. And I agree. We're supposed to have everything basically handed to us. I don't get it. When did that philosophy come? I don't think the English and the people from Britain came over to settle America to work for somebody or to be given all the entitlements. I think they came here for free enterprise to be able to create and I think we've lost that.

I think the change we're going from our country to our corporation.

Maybe.

It's a big difference.

**MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT 6. (READ ALOUD) HOW MANY GO WITH THE TOP ONE? 2. 8 ON THE BOTTOM. TELL ME WHY MOST OF YOU WENT TO THE BOTTOM ONE.**

I guess basically because they manage to keep more of their money, getting back to his point about, (inaudible). You might as well save money where you can and have something at the end, because you haven't saved.

I think we have to get a realistic picture of where we fit in this global economy. It sounds catchall; the airline has somebody from India answering the phone when I call customer service. That's an indication. We've been so autonomous all these years. I mean the American way. What are 4 percent of the world's population? We consume 35 percent of its resources or something ridiculous. I mean we've always been on the top of this food chain of the world's economy. And I think we have to, between gas prices and healthcare, I think in the next couple of years we're going to see. . .

And jobs.

And jobs, we're going to be right back on our ass. I used to make close to 70 grand a year. I made 7 grand last year. And I'm not the only one. The tax base has to be so eroded right now. Other than these guys living in these houses that they're building up in Sherwood and out by me, who's paying for all this stuff? Obviously these pockets got holes in them and these services are reaching down their pant legs because there can't be this money there. I can't believe that the tax base is there to provide all these services. More and more people are relying on the government because there's less and less people making the big bucks to support the tax base from everything from property taxes to whatever they do with all their income taxes. We've got to get some perspective that our little place in the world maybe is making, two people making 20 grand each a year or whatever it takes to get by and just maybe lowering your standards a little bit and forcing

some of these things that we don't even like to think about that are going to hurt. Carpooling or maybe having your own garden. Or maybe grabbing a road kill every now and then.

**MODERATOR—OTHER THOUGHTS ON THESE TWO STATEMENT HERE?**

One of the things that bothered me on this second one, I choose the second one, but one of the things that stood out was protecting retirement security. Not because I expect an entitlement, but I see a lot of people like my folks who are retired, and their retirement pension is being threatened. All the American Airline employees who, there's just a mass undermining of that whole security level for people who have put in their time and worked many, many years earning a pension, earning a subsistence after they retire. And it's being taken away from them and they don't have any choice in the matter.

**MODERATOR—HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT THAT IN THE NEWS LATELY, ABOUT COMPANIES DEFAULTING ON PENSIONS?**

It just happened to American Airlines, didn't it?

**MODERATOR—UNITED.**

Oh United. I'm sorry.

Big time.

**MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT THAT? YOU CAN'T BLAME THE WORKERS, RIGHT? THEY WORKED THEIR WHOLE LIFE THINKING THAT IT WAS GOING TO BE THERE AND NOW IT'S GONE. WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?**

I think the prime example of that is General Motors, the current situation they're in, which seems virtually hopeless in that situation.

Regulators allow it to happen. They know what the loopholes are. They know that they're not going to make good on these promises. They know that.

Because they do it themselves, social security money.

Exactly.

And raiding all the cookie jars they can.

It's like us. You project how much you're going to spend or how much it's going to cost to live when you get out there, but then you find out that the healthcare cost went up by ten. I mean you get there and you go whew.

We'll see what happens when the majority of the people retired are going to pay and the majority people paying for those benefits are going to be minorities. They're not going to like that.

I think of the bottom issue, the only one that has any chance at this time of having any resolution is protecting retirement security. I think the other two are already insolvable.

It is amazing that GM pays 5.6 billion dollars a year for their healthcare. And you knew they were in trouble when they gave you the same price that their employees get for a car. Right? You knew they were in trouble.

But they're still making money at that.

Granted. But.

I don't know if you read that, but I was reading something too about the GM situation and because of just healthcare, the average price of a car is, \$1,500 is added to the price of a car just based on the healthcare premium that the company is paying.

And they figured a lot of the 5.6 is for the people who are retired.

As they said, they have one person working for every two that are retired to cover their benefits and stuff. I seen it on TV last week.

**MODERATOR—THE TOP ONE SAYS THAT TAX CUTS ARE THE KEY TO SUSTAIN ECONOMIC GROWTH. WE'VE HAD TAX CUTS EVERY YEAR FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS. HAVE YOU SEEN A DIFFERENCE FOR YOURSELVES PERSONALLY?**

Not on the bottom line because my utilities are more expensive. The gas is more expensive. Healthcare is more expensive. If all my expenses go up more than what the tax cuts can account for them I'm going the wrong direction still. And it's meaningless.

I sense we live in a catch 22 situation. Taxes, at least in the state of Wisconsin, third highest tax state in the country, it's ridiculous what we pay in taxes here. So if you get the tax cuts, which you just hit it, Tim in my opinion, we may get a tax cut, but it's just swallowed up.

**MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT 7. (READ ALOUD) HOW MANY GO WITH THE TOP ONE? 4. AND THE BOTTOM? 6. 6 OF THE 10 OF YOU WANT TO STAY THE COURSE. WHY? WAS THERE ONE PARTICULAR THING IN HERE THAT STOOD OUT TO YOU?**

You'd look like a weeny if you didn't.

Well.

And no respect.

**MODERATOR—LOSE OUR STANDING.**

I think it already is a training ground for terrorists and has been for many, many years. It will show them that we're not committed.

**MODERATOR—OTHER REASONS WHY YOU PICKED TO BOTTOM ONE?**

I just don't feel that there's enough stability over there for them to be self sufficient with their government. Before we went over, there was at least some stability there. I don't agree with that stability and what it was, but at least it was there. And if we pullout now, its going to be total chaos and its going to be worse than a training ground for terrorists, its going to be a training ground for a lot of anti American behavior. Not just the terrorist type. I can see a lot of people going from Iraq and infiltrating India where they have a lot of our workers, a lot of the jobs are over there now. I think its going to dilute our effectiveness in the world if we pulled out right now.

**MODERATOR—THOSE OF YOU WHO WENT WITH THE TOP ONE, WHY?**

Just the opposite of what he just said. I think it wasn't a terrorist training ground. I think it is now. They're coming from Syria, Libya, Afghanistan and Iran. They're coming from all over.

Get a little target practice.

Saudi Arabia. I don't think they were there before. I think they maybe were in Syria and these other places, but I sure don't think they were in Iraq. We went to Afghanistan and to supposedly get rid of all these weapons we had to go into Iraq. I think it was just a big mistake. I think they didn't think it through.

**MODERATOR—OTHER THOUGHTS ON THE TOP ONE?**

Well part of Bush's justification is that we're making the world safer. I think that cooperation from our allies; well then let's get more of the world involved then. Why are we making the lion's share of the sacrifice here if we're serving the whole world in this crusade? Get everybody involved. A couple of dozen Italians and some Turkish guys or something, but it's basically nothing.

And also on that, they said, I heard like a week or so ago that there was 2500 troops, Iraqi troops that were trained now. 2500. How many is the goal?

There's got to be more than that.

That were fully trained, 2500. And that was coming from Cheney or somebody. Or one of the generals. I don't know.

Not the New York Times?

No. This was on one of the news programs on PBS.

I think they're taking the right course of action not really giving a pull up on that line. And they shouldn't. But I think they do need a new plan and get some of these other countries in there. Our plan is to make it democratic or a democracy and spread capitalism. And that will do it. Give them all DVD players and MP3 players, and some TV stations, and some Nikes and off they go. They just needed a little watering to let that grow. And they got some of the leaders out and now maybe it can grow.

**MODERATOR—THOSE OF YOU WHO PICKED THE BOTTOM ONE, DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FIRST SENTENCE OF THE TOP ONE, THAT THE CURRENT COURSE OF ACTION IN IRAQ IS FAILING OR DO YOU THINK THAT STAYING THE COURSE MEANS DOING EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE DOING?**

Part of it is failing. Getting something would have been a combination of the two, but just, the light at the end of the tunnel just isn't there. And there's. . .

Remember Vietnam.

There's no definite in hand. I give them on the timetable thing, but.

Make it quick.

**MODERATOR—MAYBE YOU AGREE WITH THE PART THAT SAYS WE NEED A NEW PLAN?**

Somewhat, yes.

**MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK? DO WE NEED A NEW PLAN? SOMEWHERE BETWEEN DOING EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE DOING AND PULLING OUT?**

I'd have to admit that I'm sure it was baffling to the president when France, Germany, who we absolutely kept alive in World War I, rebuilt their countries, decided that forever reason they were going to not be a part of that.

Iraq is the biggest customer for crying out loud. They're not going to. . .

Everybody hounded, I'm sure Tony Blair from Britain just about lost an election because of his stand with the president. They just don't like the fact that he did that. But he stuck

with his ally. So, as far as gaining cooperation from our allies, I think that's one thing we definitely need to do. I don't know if it's going to happen though.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT 8. (READ ALOUD) HOW MANY FOLKS GO WITH THE TOP ONE? 2. THAT GIVES US 8 ON THE BOTTOM. 8 OF THE 10 OF YOU WENT WITH THE BOTTOM ONE. YOU DON'T THINK THAT THE COUNTRY IS DIVIDED AT THIS POINT? YOU THINK THIS IS MORE JUST ABOUT BUSH, KERRY, GORE, THOSE DYNAMICS THAN IT IS ABOUT FUNDAMENTAL CULTURAL DIVIDE BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF OUR COUNTRY?

I definitely don't think that it's divided because of the TV, the internet; I think everything is just the opposite. I think its very clear to this is the attitudes from different politicians. And their strength in advertising their skills that the others don't seem to have, that only they have. I think that's, I think we're very persuaded by what we see.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK?

I think on the bottom, the American strength as in diversity is the key phrase of anything in this whole thing. I think it's the primary thing that keeps this country.

Even in diversity, I mean in this room we're all kind of white middle aged guys, but there's a lot of diversity out there and I like to think in my little world, if my kids are safe, happy and fed, things are okay out there. I like to think that if it's an Asian living in a borough of Los Angeles or someone up in the Bronx, or in Tennessee or Alabama, I'm assuming they have the same feeling. And to that end, whatever the political climate is, if it still accommodates that in whatever fashion, we have a degree of safe, happy and well fed, I'd like to think that's enough. We should be able to do our own little thing on the side and still have that or something like that to unify us as a society. Not much else is more important.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK?

I voted for the top one.

MODERATOR—WHY?

I think this last election showed us how politically divided we are. It was from both sides. That's why I don't vote a straight ticket ever. But, it just seems like it was so vindictive. It didn't matter which side you were on.

MODERATOR—THE QUESTION IS, IS THIS JUST ABOUT THAT ELECTION CLIMATE OR IS THIS A FUNDAMENTAL DIVIDE THAT WE'RE GOING TO CONTINUE TO SEE IN AND OUT OF ELECTION?

I think its fundamental divide you're going to see in and out of elections.

MODERATOR—WHAT'S THE DIVISION ALONG? IS IT ALONG PARTY LINES? IS IT ALONG RELIGIOUS LINES? CULTURAL?

No, I think it's along moral issues.

Cultural lines. You see it in the judge nominations for the Supreme Court that are going to be coming up. You'll see the attack rise to incredible levels because that's a watershed event for cultural effect.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK?

That's what I mean too. The cultural events are going to be the moral issues.

MODERATOR—DO THE REST OF YOU THINK THE COUNTRY IS DIVIDED ALONG THOSE CULTURAL OR MORAL LINES?

I think because of our diversity and priorities, everybody has their own priorities, then the freedom to do that, that's where you see the different things show up like the judging the minorities at the top or whatever. But because we have that basic agreement at the bottom, that's where I was saying that the priorities are pretty much the same. It doesn't really split. Everybody is kind of looking at the same thing. Everybody can think what they want to think.

Actually, talking about diversity, I'm surprised that there are all just middle aged white guys in here. Where is the diversity for this type of a situation and this type of a group?

We were hand picked for this. Did you have your questionnaire on the phone?

MODERATOR—I'LL ANSWER QUESTIONS LIKE THAT AT THE END. FLIP TO HANDOUT 9. (READ ALOUD) HOW MANY GO WITH THE TOP ONE? 5. AND THE BOTTOM ONE? 5. WE'RE EVENLY SPLIT. WHAT ARE YOUR REACTIONS TO THESE TWO?

I could have gone either way.

Yeah.

This is the one I had the most difficulty with so far.

MODERATOR—THIS IS THE FIRST ONE THAT REALLY SPLIT YOU GUYS.

Hmm.

I think the second one is either true or false and I think it's false, that's why. You almost have to take the whole thing as it is.

Yeah, because its not just republicans are giving themselves a pay raise. When the republicans get them, so do the democrats.

Just put politicians instead of republicans or. . .

Yeah.

Middle aged white guys, democrats, it doesn't matter. You get to that point in the system, that's what you do.

I think backing up to the previous page; I see a lot of that. I think of politicians in Washington generically. And last election, I voted for George Bush primarily because he made less of an ass of himself than Kerry did during the election. And I've talked to a lot of people that did the same thing. And it's kind of sad that it comes to that point, but I think the parties are not working together towards a common interest that benefits the public.

**MODERATOR—MOST OF YOU SAY, YOU COULD SAY THAT THE TOP GOES FOR DEMOCRATS, REPUBLICANS, DOESN'T MATTER WHO. BUT WITH REPUBLICANS IN CONTROL OF CONGRESS AND EVERYTHING TO THE UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL THAT THEY ARE, DO THEY BARE SOME RESPONSIBILITY IF THIS IS WHAT THEY'RE DOING WITH THEIR POWER?**

Sure.

Sure.

Yeah.

Absolutely.

So did Clinton in the 90's. He had the same problems too.

I was going to say, on the bottom of the first, on the end it says, its time for a change in congress. I think that would be meaningless, its time for a change in congress ethic rules for politicians. I think otherwise this is just completely meaningless. I think they're both meaningless if there's no change in ethic policy.

Hmm.

**MODERATOR—WHAT I'M HEARING FROM YOU GUYS IS KIND OF THROW THE BONES OUT. EITHER WAY, IF THEY'RE DOING ALL THESE THINGS, ITS TIME FOR A CHANGE.**

Yeah. Progress is congress.

I think of a guy by the name Danny [Ozentosky] who was the powerful head of one of the biggest money spenders in the senate from the state of Illinois, who had vacation homes right here in the state of Wisconsin.

Didn't he go to jail?

Who was put in jail. Was a democrat and I think of the dude from Oregon who was a republican, who was sleeping with his secretary. Both of them got kicked out and both of them still receive a pension. And both of them still get healthcare paid for, for the rest of their life. And those are the kinds of abuses of power that you'd think, when is that kind of stuff going to end.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT 10. (READ ALOUD) HOW MANY GO WITH THE TOP ONE ON THIS? 2. AND THE BOTTOM ONE? 8. REGARDLESS OF WHICH WAY YOU VOTED, WHAT'S YOUR FEELING ON THIS?

Protecting the culture is important to me because the world (inaudible) to my children and their children, I don't want it to evolve. I don't want to see it decaying. So that's a concern.

The only reason I answered the bottom one on this one was because of the most important to me statement. The top is incredibly important and it's probably ranked up there extremely high. I really vacillated back and forth on this one.

I think the top one may or may not apply to an individual American, but the bottom one certain would affect almost everyone. That's why I chose the bottom.

I picked the top one because if they put out on the different issues, what they really stand for and stand behind it, that's more, as important. Because on the bottom, they're always fighting about those things and you never see anything done about it anyway. You're actually going to see something done about something, that's a different story. Like it says on the bottom, they've always been fighting about the economy, jobs, healthcare. You never see any significant change one way or the other. They're going to say something, do it. The other ones they've been fighting over forever and you never see any dramatic change one way or another.

MODERATOR—YOU THINK THAT POLITICIANS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON THE ISSUES ON THE TOP?

Definitely.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK?

I don't think so. I think that some people feel individually and that's, no matter what the politicians say, they're not going to change their mind.

To me I don't think they're political issues in the first section as much as they are moral issues. And I do believe that talking about what I believe from my son, I have more control over the top in what I can give to him and I believe that the government, if its in a strong economic position and there are good jobs and good healthcare when he gets old enough to work, and retirement security. The way things are going now, I have very little control over, because of the way society has gone the last decade or so. I think too much emphasis has been put on the abortion, gay marriage, protecting the role of religion issues. I really don't believe those are political issues and it shouldn't be. But they're always dragged in because they create the most controversy and animosity.

And camera time.

Exactly.

There are things, Tim makes a good point, these are things that we should be able to impart to our kids by the time they're in college or even before. I already had my thoughts about some of these things. (Inaudible) because somebody was voting a certain way. And I don't think the abortionists have a very powerful lobby. I don't think there's a lot of money being poured in from the moral high road places and the gay alliances and things. Whereas, talk to the pharmaceutical companies and all the other things that are driving the big ship up there. That's where they should anti up what they're doing and how they're voting, because how are you playing the cards you're getting dealt from the big corporations that are making these decisions? I can't have (inaudible) to anything. I've got to live with it. On the top one I can say my piece and try to leave my impression on at least my kids and the people around me.

The top issues will be resolved in the courts and control in the courts is done through the political process. That's how they are political issues.

**MODERATOR—ANYONE ELSE? FLIP TO HANDOUT 11. (READ ALOUD)**

If it was me, I would ask the democrats on that last sentence, the problem I see with the democrats is that they say those things, but they don't seem to say how they're going to do those things. As far as the top part, there's no doubt, I was really torn with the Terry Schiavo situation. I wish she would have had a living will and I'm not sure if that was a right or congress to step in.

**MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK ABOUT THIS WHOLE STATEMENT? WHAT DOES IT SAY TO YOU?**

I believe it. It sold me.

**MODERATOR—WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU? WHAT RINGS TRUE?**

I guess it's just the basic way that I feel today. I mean that's not all, but that puts it pretty clearly.

**MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU? WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU IN THIS STATEMENT?**

The whole thing stands out me. I agree with everything in it. I'm trying to pick one or two sentences out that might have a little bit more meaning to me, but I think every single one of them, every single word here is appropriate.

**MODERATOR—OTHERS?**

Lowering healthcare costs to me sounds like socialized medicine.

**MODERATOR—HAVE YOU GUYS THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT CONGRESS HAS BEEN DOING SINCE THE ELECTION? THEY'VE HAD SIX MONTHS NOW. DO YOU FEEL LIKE THEY'RE PAYING ATTENTION TO THE THINGS THAT THE COUNTRY SHOULD BE FOCUSING ON?**

No.

**MODERATOR—DEMOCRATS ARE SAYING, TERRY SCHIAVO, TOM DELAY, THIS ISN'T WHAT WE SHOULD BE WORRYING ABOUT. DO YOU HAVE ANY SENSE THAT CONGRESS IS FOCUSED ON THE WRONG THINGS?**

I do. I believe that they're focusing on issues that they shouldn't be focusing on and they're putting too much emphasis on big business, what are they going to do to bailout the airlines? Every time I see a topic in the newspaper I wonder, what does that have to do with me? And the more time goes on, the less in touch I feel like I am with our government. I think they've kind of left me to hang out to dry. I think that the average person out there, I think they've just left us out to dry.

**MODERATOR—OTHER REACTIONS TO THIS ONE?**

It's like reading the newspaper. I can't read it and not just get upset. I've got to get to another, something above the fold for Michael Jackson to get off the front page and in the prime spot where they should be talking about this stuff. Again, I can freely substitute politicians with democrats and middle aged white guys with republicans throughout these things; because everybody is trying to do something and I think it's just a lot of grandstanding.

I agree.

And avoiding the big issues because those are just really tough decisions. They can blow smoke up our ass all day with this little Michael Jackson type stuff. Its all smoke and mirrors. It's frustrating.

**MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT 12. (READ ALOUD) WHAT'S YOUR INITIAL REACTION TO THAT? DOES IT RING TRUE? AGREE, DISAGREE?**

It sounds like election talk.

They're raping social security and they talk about what our deficits every year, but they're not saying that they're taking 4, 500 billion dollars from social security this year. I mean that doesn't even, why don't they talk about that more? They don't even put it as part of our deficit. We probably have a deficit of a trillion dollars a year. Not just 500 billion or whatever it is.

**MODERATOR—OTHER REACTIONS TO THIS STATEMENT?**

I couldn't see where they could project one concrete evidence of any of these statements. Except possibly Iraq, but as far as the economy, I can't think of one thing they've done to make any concrete difference in the overall ending of any of these. Except for possibly the Iraq situation.

I think what's in this box here to me might talk about their intentions, but it's not followed up by action.

**MODERATOR—OTHER REACTIONS TO IT?**

Saying we must continue to reign in spending infers that they're reigning in spending.

I was just reading Time magazine, Bush has spent 30 percent more and like education, pro education, they've spent 30 percent less. So it's just a bunch of bullshit.

**MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT REPUBLICANS SAYING, THIS IS ABOUT TWO THINGS, IT'S ABOUT THE ECONOMY, IT'S ABOUT IRAQ? WE'RE ABOUT PROTECTING OUR CITIZENS, WHICH STARTS WITH IRAQ. AND THEY'RE SAYING, WE'RE NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE LITTLE STUFF. WE'RE FOCUSED ON TWO THINGS AND THIS IS IT.**

It would be nice if they would do that though. They talk about it, but they don't, they're not progressive enough with it. There's too much, the effort gets watered down because of all the special interests and big corporation spending, all the pork.

What they should do, what they should probably do is with the prisons filling up; I had heard that it was one of the biggest growth industries since the Cold War is our prison system. Just like back in prohibition. Look at all the people that were in there for alcohol, now 60 to 80 percent are in there for drugs. I had heard like 20 years ago, a cash crop of marijuana was 32 billion dollars a year. Legalize the shit. Pay for our healthcare and we'll be done.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT 13. (READ ALOUD)

I would say this statement makes tremendously more common sense than the previous page if it was ever enacted. I would agree with this statement.

I agree.

If it's ever enacted in reality. It makes a tremendous amount of common sense for every American to support this rather than the previous if it ever becomes reality.

MODERATOR—THE SKEPTICISM IS DULY NOTED. TAKING IT ON ITS FACE VALUE, WHAT DO YOU LIKE OR NOT LIKE?

Did the democrats really say all of this? Because the unfair trade policy I believe is called NAFTA. I believe that was signed into law by the democrats. So if we're talking about it for trade policies, let's go back to that point and say, what happened back there? Because that was the beginning.

MODERATOR—OTHER REACTIONS TO THIS STATEMENT?

End the war on terror, let's focus less on occupying Iraq and more (inaudible). It struck me as amen I mean Jesus, what are they thinking at this point? How can you not think that we, you almost have to assume that this thing, we're going to setup this democratic political system and within months this thing is going to implode because there's these three rival tribes that Saddam at least was keeping in three different corners. And no matter what we setup and how many guys we give uniforms, and how many buildings we restore, this thing is coming back down onto us. We're there for a long time I'm afraid if we're just going to see it with flowered streets and kids with baskets of flowers again because that's a long ways away.

If we didn't need their oil we could tell them to pound sand up their ass.

(Many talking at once)

MODERATOR—DEMOCRATS BASICALLY LAYOUT THREE THINGS HERE. THEY ELIMINATE TAX CUTS FOR COMPANIES THAT SHIP AMERICAN JOBS OVERSEES, GOOD OR BAD?

Absolutely.

I think it's great.

MODERATOR—STANDUP TO COUNTRIES LIKE CHINA WHOSE UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES HAVE DONE ALL THESE THINGS.

Great.

Absolutely.

Yeah.

**MODERATOR—WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? WHAT UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?**

The tariffs if nothing else.

We just have to, if they can make a DVD player and ship it over here and we can buy it for 30 bucks, how are we going to compete? I mean is that 30 dollars subsidized by the government?

Americans don't have any principals.

Or can we make and sell DVD players for 30 bucks here?

It just blew my mind when I bought that flag and it said, made in China.

We can fix the DVD player for 30 bucks.

They won't look at it for 60 bucks.

(Many talking at once)

Nowadays you just toss it out and get a new one.

For 30 bucks that's right. They're disposable.

China is the fastest growing economy in the world and it's probably because they pay their employees about 8 cents a week.

And look at the pollution over there.

**MODERATOR—JOHNS TALKING ABOUT, CHINA IS GROWING SO FAST, THEY'RE GOING TO START BUYING UP ALL OF OUR OIL, THEY'VE GOT THIS RAPIDLY EXPANDING ECONOMY, ARE YOU WORRYING ABOUT CHINA? DO YOU THINK THAT WE NEED TO START DEALING WITH CHINA THE SAME WAY WE'RE DEALING WITH IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, NORTH KOREA?**

Yeah. (Inaudible).

The percentage of their GDP that they dedicate toward military spending is a concern. Because they have no enemies really of any size except us.

We've been the big boy on the block for the last 100 years, but believe me, in my kid's lifetime, we're not going to be the big boy on the block anymore. China is going to be. Militarily and economically. We're screwed.

They said something also on TV about India, how they're expanding so fast and child labor, and it's just going to get worse.

MODERATOR—THE LAST PIECE HERE, WAR ON TERROR. LET'S FOCUS LESS ON OCCUPYING IRAQ AND MORE ON EXPANDING TRADE AND EDUCATION, SECURING LOOSE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, SECURING OUR PORTS AND BORDERS HERE AT HOME. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?

Money better spent.

Hmm.

MODERATOR—I SEE A LOT OF HEADS NODDING TO THAT.

Creating education in countries where they don't allow the women to be educated. It's like. . .

Which was Iraq.

Was. How do you improve education in those countries?

What we've got to do is we've got to let people immigrate into the United States because we need new growth. And what we should do is hookup with some of these smart people from other countries. Give them loans and grants, and so on to have them be pharmacists and doctors, and people like that. And get them hooked into an employment situation so that for the next five years after they do get that training that they've got to, you know, do it cheaper than what we're paying right now. Get more doctors; get more nurses so that the supply and demand is more equal.

They'll find out our system and money talks.

They all want to be over here.

When an immigrant comes to America, he pays no taxes for seven years.

Really?

Really.

That's right.

If its he's working in the mill next to you he's paying no taxes.

How is that?

Good question.

Why do you think there are so many people from India running gas stations?

That's why you don't have a diverse group here.

**MODERATOR—YOU FIGURED IT OUT. ANY OTHER REACTIONS TO THIS STATEMENT? FLIP TO HANDOUT 14. (INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN)**

(end of session)