

Washington Post
Interview with Donald Trump
By Dan Balz and Jenna Johnson

Donald Trump: -- a whole new set of files -- political files.

[indiscernible]

Dan Balz: What does that mean?

Donald Trump: Things that I read that I really feel that I want to keep, I keep them around. I have a lot of files [indiscernible] nearby.

Jenna Johnson: We saw your Instagram video. Did you turn that up?

Donald Trump: Oh, that just came out? Yeah. How was it? Did you think it was interesting?

Female Interviewer: It definitely got people talking.

Donald Trump: I can imagine.

Female Interviewer: Was it your idea?

Donald Trump: Yeah. That cost me two dollars, right?

Female Voice: Yes.

Donald Trump: I must say running the election, I've spent less than anybody else and obviously had the best result. I have less people working for me than anybody else. Obviously, I'm doing better than anybody. Everybody would've said I

would've been really working right now while Hillary was watching me. It turned out to be just the opposite. In fact, the end, there was actually a couple of things reported by the *Washington Post* and others that not only will the convention go to July, but it could be a new convention in August, which I guess happened one time or something in the history of the country where it didn't even get solved. Here I am. I had the big Indiana; well, big New York; big Pennsylvania; Maryland, you know, the whole thing. Then on top of that, the big Indiana and everybody said, *no mas*.

Male Interviewer: We'll get into that because we're here to really [cross-talking].

Donald Trump: That's good. You go ahead. Do you want something to drink before we start?

Male Interviewer: I'm fine.

Female Interviewer: I'm fine. Really quick on the Instagram video, are you going to keep hitting Bill Clinton? Are there other things that you're planning [cross-talking]?

Donald Trump: Well, I don't think that's a Bill hit; I think it may be a Hillary hit. They said things about me, which were very nasty. And I don't want to play that game at all. I don't want to play at all. But they said things about me that were very nasty. As long as they do that, I can play it whatever level I have to play at. I think I've proven that.

Female Interviewer: Yeah. These things are so old. Did they still matter even all these decades?

Donald Trump: I think they do.

[cross-talking]

Female Interviewer: Well, I know you've said that you don't want to dig back all the way into your past on some things. Why go back on Bill Clinton on some of these things?

Donald Trump: Well, Hillary has been playing the woman's card 100 percent. I think I'm going to do very well with women. I think women want security. They want safety. They want the military. They want to stop terrorism. They see her horrible moves on -- if you look at Libya. Benghazi came because of Libya. It's a fact, because of what happened in Libya, the Benghazi disaster.

Amazingly, the public never picked up on Benghazi like I thought they should have maybe because a lot of people in mainstream don't write too much about it. But the public has never picked up on Benghazi like I would have thought. The Clinton Foundation's going to be very interesting because there's so many things. When you talk about quid pro quo, there are so many things going on there that could be a big factor. But no, the reason is, Jenna, that Hillary's been hitting me on that. So if she's going to play those cards, I'm going to play the same cards.

An honor to have you back up. And thank you for being so fair. You've been really fair. Tough one need be, and very tough unfortunately when need be. I really mean this, Dan, you've been very fair.

Male Interviewer: Thanks. I will. I try to be fair.

Donald Trump: I appreciate that.

Male Interviewer: Tough when I need to be. We're working on one of the chapters of the book. It has to do with how you won. As an opening question, as you look back on all this --

Donald Trump: process.

Male Voice: -- no, no, but give us three turning points in your mind that were the key to your becoming the presumptive nominee.

Donald Trump: Well, the first turning point was when I decided to do it. I didn't really know for sure until literally a couple of days before because I have to give up a lot. Look, I've always heard that for a very successful person, a very rich person to run for president is something you just don't do. You don't do. And I can see why: because of the falsities, the viciousness, it's beyond anything. I think I'm handling it very nicely and I fight back. When I hear the *Washington Post* has 20 reporters on me, which is wrong, and very few on Hillary and very few on other candidates actually, very, very few, so the level of hatred is pretty amazing.

So I think, number one, when I decided to do it was a big turning point almost because I was really thinking in terms of not doing it. I thought of it before, most particularly during the Romney run. If you look back, you'll see I was doing very well on the polls, really well. In fact, the day I announced that I wouldn't do it, NBC was putting a lot of pressure on to renew *The Apprentice*, which they did again. Generally, they sat right in that chair, Steve Burke right there and the heads of NBC one year ago, you know, sometime prior to June 16th, two months prior to June 16th. They tried to convince me to do *The Apprentice* again. As you know, even in the 14th season, it did fantastically well. They wanted me to do it again. I said no.

That was a turning point. When I turned down *The Apprentice*, in a way, was a turning point because you're turning down, not only -- look, it's still a lot of money. I get paid a lot of money. You saw that. Two hundred and thirteen million dollars was reported as of a year ago is what I've made from doing *The Apprentice*. I also own -- I have a big chunk of it with Mark Burnett. Mark Burnett and I have the power over *The Apprentice*. And we chose Arnold Schwarzenegger to take my place. That was a little bit of a turning point because you're giving up a primetime show that has done very well for 14 seasons. It was a lot of money I made. It was reported that I made \$213 million. It was reported, certified that I made up

until that point. Obviously, you get paid a lot of money for doing it. You're also in primetime television between an hour and two hours a week. Some people think it's trivial. It's not trivial at all.

Male Interviewer: What was the decision this time? You had looked at it before, as you said, several times. You were in a run up in 2011 to do it. Why did you not do it then? Why did you do it this time?

Donald Trump: Okay, that's such a great question. In 2011, my children were younger, Ivanka, who you know and met. My children were younger. I was doing numerous jobs, many jobs, and I really wanted to wrap them up. Now, I've just finished Doral in Miami and a couple of others. The Old Post Office is the one - because we own 100 percent of that and owned 100 percent of Doral. One of the misconceptions, although it's a great thing, I do licensing deals, but I own a lot of stuff. We have many licensing deals going on all over the world right now. We're going to have hundreds of them all over the world.

The Old Post Office is finishing up. In fact, we'll be one year ahead of schedule, which looks awfully good down on the résumé. We're going to be opening that around September 15th. I mean open-open. That's approximately one year ahead of schedule, which is great. That's what I do. I mean, I think building and building on time, on budget, even ahead of schedule

is one of my big strengths, which is awfully a good strength to have for infrastructure of this country, where the country is falling apart.

When I go back four years, Dan, I had a signed contract with *The Apprentice*, so I couldn't say I won't do it because I actually had another signed for another year. I'd actually have to go and get my way out of it. The show was doing very well so it wouldn't be that easy. And I had numerous jobs going on.

It's hard to say to NBC where they have a very successful show that, would you let me out of a season? I talked about it routinely with them. But they wouldn't have been thrilled. Also, I had numerous jobs. Now, it's four years later. I think in many ways, the country is doing worse from the standpoint of jobs, from the standpoint of anger. I think the Iran deal was an absolute -- the deal they made with Iran was an absolute killer deal. Killer deal. Hillary's in favor it and I'm totally against it. I thought it was a killer deal. Not that I'm against making deals, but they have to be good deals. They can't be incompetent deals. That's an incompetent deal done by incompetent people.

I think as I looked at things that were happening, I just said, this is the right time to do it. My children are four years older. I have great executives. I lightened up on the hard jobs, which is the big building developments where there's

risk. You want to get them finished, everything else. That would be essentially a turning point. That's why I decided this way.

Male Interviewer: That's one turning point.

Donald Trump: One turning point would be some time prior to turning down *The Apprentice* with the extension for a lot of money, for a long extension, too - a lot of money and a lot of prestige. You have a primetime television show that does very well.

The other would be just a day - maybe you could put this in the same category - the day and a few days before I announced. Once I sent out the press release, it's going to be awfully hard. I'll take a very bad day if I turned out the press release and then decided not to. When I put out that release that we're going to meet on June 16th, and that was the famous escalator ride down.

Such an interesting question, nobody has asked to do it that way. I think a very important element was the polls have me doing very well on the debates. They do all those online polls. *Time* magazine does, and then Drudge and all of them. There's about six or seven of them. I seem to have done very well on the debates. That was important because I didn't know. I never did that kind of debating before. I didn't know what that was going to be like. I actually like it. But I didn't

know that debating would be good, bad or indifferent. I'm debating against the people that do that professionally. I'm running against 16 very capable people. I feel very good.

The first debate, I felt I was hit unfairly, but that's okay. But I came out very good on that debate. Every single online poll -- will you get that information [for] Dan? That and the Facebook stuff and that Google Map, which was crazy. But every single online poll -- and I'm saying this as we're recording -- of every single debate that I was in -- I skipped the one debate because I didn't think I was being treated fairly -- but every single online poll of every single debate, I won. I won every one of them.

Now, these are hundreds of thousands of people. This isn't like, gee, I'm sending somebody, dial in. After the debate, polls have become much -- I think I made polls more important, to be honest with you, because I talk about polls. The new polls are terrific. The Morning Tracking Poll now, it's like that. We're now exceeding her. Your *Washington Post* came out with a beauty where we're a couple of points ahead -- strongly, strong trend, too, which is very important.

Every single poll had me winning the debates. I didn't know about the debates. But I did know because I've always gotten ratings. NBC always called me the ratings machine, the nickname. You found that out. Of course, the numbers came out

and there's 24 million for NBC; a couple of weeks later it was 23.5 million for CNN. One was the highest in the history of cable television. The other one was the highest in the history of CNN. They cover a lot of wars. They cover a lot of interesting stuff. I was less surprised by that, I think, than some other things. I've always gotten very high ratings, which I guess is one of the reasons that television has covered me to that extent perhaps.

Male Interviewer: Give us the third turning point. Then we got some specific points.

Donald Trump: A third turning point was a little bit Iowa, because I wasn't given proper credit in Iowa.

Male Interviewer: How do you mean?

Donald Trump: I'll tell you. I came in second in Iowa. I should have come in first. My team was not as good as -- I'm a very good manager. And I had a team that frankly I believe that I won -- but you know I'm not a big fan of the caucus system. When people walked in, they had lots of people on the other side trying to turn these people around. Yet I came in a very strong second. I got no credit for it.

Marco came in third. They were saying, it's like, great. I said, well, what about me? I came in second. I've never done this before. It did awaken me to the nastiness of politics. People would walk in wanting to vote for Trump. They were just

engulfed by Cruz people like, oh, didn't you know this, didn't you know that - all sorts of false things. They also did a very unfair number on Ben Carson where they said he has left the race, he has left the race, because I should have won. I learned all about politics in one evening. I learned a lot about politics in one evening, the dirtiness. I also learned that I should have been given credit. I have never done this before. That's the first election I was ever in. I came in a very strong second.

Male Interviewer: So are you angry about that?

Donald Trump: I'll tell you. I never got credit for another one at Wisconsin. I got almost 36 percent in Wisconsin. Cruz got 40 something percent. Yet the entire establishment, millions of dollars were spent. The radio hosts were totally against and the governor's entire machine was against me. Somebody should have said I did a really good job to get a number like that. I never heard that, which was interesting.

But let me go back to this other point. So I did really well in Iowa. I was not given credit for it, but I learned a lot about politics in Iowa and I'm okay with that. Then I went to New Hampshire and did unbelievably well because I was not expected to win New Hampshire. I won going away.

Male Interviewer: Were you more motivated in New Hampshire as a result of what happened in Iowa?

Donald Trump: Yeah, because I shouldn't have lost Iowa. I think Iowa was a state that I did really well in. Shenanigans sort of took it away.

Male Interviewer: Do you get angry in a moment like that?

Donald Trump: No. I know that's the way life works. A lot of times, people ask me, what's the difference between like top business people and politicians? You can't totally generalize, but I would say the business people can be tougher, but the politicians can be much more deceptive. It's a very deceptive group of people. I wouldn't even tell you about the press difference. But there's a big difference there too. I won't discuss it. But I've always found that to be an interesting question. I deal with the top people and there's a certain toughness that they have that's greater than the politicians. But the politicians are far more deceptive, which to me is that's the way it is. That's just my opinion.

So I think that New Hampshire was a big moment for me. I'm a pretty political person. I was on the other side giving hundreds -- I guess I gave \$350,000 to the RGA, Republican Governors' Association. Historically, I gave always a lot of money to politicians including to New York where I have a lot of stuff and a lot of zoning. I got a city zoned on the West Side of Manhattan from 72nd Street to 59th Street. That was a tremendous success, like a phenomenal success.

Nobody writes about my successes. They only talk about, oh, how's your water company doing? My water company's doing great actually. But nobody knows about the water company. I have a water company that does a big business. They talk about my water company.

But I said, I wonder, why don't they talk about all of these places all over the country, all over the world that are tremendous successes? They don't want to talk about that. I think that when I came down, when I made the speech and when I won New Hampshire -- New Hampshire was a very important state for me because as a person that was involved in politics but really from the other side -- from the donor side I guess you could say, and nobody knows more about the donor side than I do -- I think the words, "New Hampshire," meant a lot to me. It's just a very important state politically. I always heard all my whole life, New Hampshire, right? You hear Iowa. You hear New Hampshire.

Doing well in Iowa, which I was never given credit for --

I don't know if you remember. When I came in second, it was a strong second. It was a strong second, and I got zero credit, and Rubio came in third. They were talking like he was the next coming. I said, but I beat him by a lot. I beat him. Why aren't they talking about that? So I learned a little bit about lots of things including unfair treatment of the press.

But New Hampshire was great because I wasn't expected to win. I would say Bush was probably expected to win. That was going to always be his state. He had spent a fortune in New Hampshire. He had spent a fortune on negative ads on me, a fortune. I'm getting hit 15 different ways with the negative ads. Then I won it by a lot easily, so that was a big one.

I'd say another one was a great thing that happened to me was in South Carolina. That was going to be a firewall. Cruz has many firewalls, right? That didn't work out too well because I won the South, all of the South. I won in Alabama, in Arkansas on everything. Kentucky, I won. I mean, the state of Florida was an incredible victory. But I won the entire South. I think, Jenna, right? Everything. I mean, I can't think of anything I didn't win there. That was all going to be Cruz's territory, right? We have everything there. That was going to be Cruz's territory. Not only did I win them, but I won them by massive numbers. I got almost 50 percent in the state of Alabama. During a similar time, I won Massachusetts with almost 50 percent.

I will tell you that winning very different places like that with tremendous percentages against many people -- you've heard me say this. I've been treated -- I don't know if it's purposely or is it a lack of knowledge by the pundits, but I think it's probably purposely. As you know, we started off with

17 people. So the first place, I had 16. You had to beat -- and I got a lot of people in Iowa, a lot of people in New Hampshire, but I had many, many people. If you start taking that down where you would normally have one or two or three people instead of 16 people, my numbers were enormous, as good as they are now. And the pundits never bring that out. In other words, when I won Massachusetts -- you'll have to check the number but let's say I had five, or seven, or ten people -- we had a lot. And yet, I get almost 50 percent. That's a phenomenal thing. I know that, for instance, in watching somebody like a Charles Krauthammer, he was conscious: "He didn't get 50 percent." But I had 12 people. You understand? You can't get 50 percent.

I watched Hillary Clinton the other day -- two weeks ago because now, I'm catching up very rapidly. But I broke the all-time record in the history of the Republican Party for the number of votes in the primary. But she said, "I have 1.7 million votes more than Trump." Well, she's had one candidate, whereas, I started off with 16. And by the way, 16 accomplished people, you know, governors and senators and others. And I'll end up beating her in the end. But when you have one person and I have 16 or 15, it dwindled down, it's not even a contest. It's not even close.

Male Interviewer: There are two early moments that we wanted to ask you about. One is the announcement day and the other is the first debate. And in both cases, you did something that was in a sense off script or unexpected. On announcement day, the short text that had been put out of your speech did not include any of the references you made about Mexicans. That basically came from you. So one question is, how did that evolve? What made you decide to do it at that moment? In the first debate, there's the question about, if there's anybody here who's not prepared to question --

[Unrelated conversation]

Male Interviewer: You raised your hand. The only one.

Donald Trump: It took courage.

Male Interviewer: Put us inside on both of those? How did you come to do both of those things?

Donald Trump: Well, on the raising of the hand, we'll start with that, that was an interesting moment because I had no idea that was going to happen. And if you remember, that was a very big crowd not only because it was the first debate but it was in the arena. It was in a basketball arena that they had cut, and so we had a massive audience and we had thousands of people. And they were Republicans and they were people that wanted to unify and these were people that wanted to see the pledge signed or whatever.

And I said this is a rough question. I mean, in a certain way that question might have been tougher than Megyn's question. But raise your hand. And I'm the only one that raised my hand. Now, the question wasn't meant for anybody else in the room. It was only meant for me because the other people in the room didn't really pertain to them, right?

Male Interviewer: Right.

Donald Trump: So I raised my hand and I got a lot of credit for it. I got a lot of credit for raising my hand. Although the audience --

Male Interviewer: The audience didn't give you credit --

Donald Trump: No, they didn't. They didn't actually. It's funny they gave me great credit as I went through the debate but they really went wild on that one. But it wasn't -- it was sort of a laughing negativity as opposed to an angry negativity. I could see that. I could feel that. It was a little bit of a laughing negativity, Dan. It wasn't great anger. They understood. They got it.

Female Interviewer: Was there a calculation that went through your head as you're deciding if you could put your hand up? What was going through your head?

Donald Trump: No. There's just honesty. The honest answer is what I gave. Now, ultimately --

Male Interviewer: Then why were you not at that point prepared to say I'll -- ?

Donald Trump: Because I didn't know whether or not I would be treated fairly. And I think I've been treated fairly. I think the system is rigged. And that was the word that I came up that now everyone is using. They picked up many of my wonderful words. You never heard the system is rigged before until I started it. Now, Bernie Sanders is using the exact same expression. But the system is rigged. It's rigged in a different way. It's rigged for the Republicans differently than for the Democrats. The Democrats, it's a much more obvious rigging of the system because you have the super delegates which are a disaster. With the Republicans, it's really different.

Male Interviewer: But at that point in your candidacy, you were not convinced that the party would treat you fairly?

Donald Trump: That's correct. And that was before I was doing well. Let's see. Was I on center stage? Just about, yeah.

Male Interviewer: You were at that point.

Donald Trump: So I've been on center stage every single debate when you think of it. I've been on center stage every single debate. And one of the things I was very insistent, although it didn't always work out that way is that I always wanted an odd number because if you have an even number, you're not on center stage. You're sharing center stage with somebody

else that doesn't play. I don't know, this is sort of maybe fun for your thing, but I always fought for an odd number.

I said, wait a minute, I'm on center stage. I'm winning by a lot. I'm winning every debate. And if you give me ten people, like sharing it with somebody that doesn't belong. So I fought it. I'd usually win that. But I've been on center stage every single debate if you think of it. And you're right, I didn't think about that. But on the first debate, I was on center stage too.

So I did raise my hand and that was -- I think it was something that was respected by the audience. There was some booing but it was friendly booing if there's such a thing. But it was friendly booing. They were laughing. They were booing. Everybody understood exactly what I meant. And I did the right thing. It would have been much easier just to keep my hand down. Don't forget that was like -- was that the first or second?

Male Interviewer: That was the first.

Female Interviewer: That was the very first. The first question.

Donald Trump: The first thing that ever happened to me as a professional politician on a debate stage, which I had never done before, was that question. And I made the right decision

to do it. It showed honesty. And I think people respected the honesty. And then the second, you asked about --

Male Interviewer: About the decision to talk about -- on immigration and Mexicans sending rapists and murderers.

Donald Trump: Yeah. The interesting one on that is that if you got a copy of my speech, we sent out a copy prior to it. Reading it, I'd say, wait a minute. Beyond that question, I didn't want to do that speech.

Male Interviewer: You didn't want to do it?

Donald Trump: No, I didn't.

Male Interviewer: Why not?

Donald Trump: Because I really view that, again, never having done this before, I viewed that as an outline, not necessarily something that I would have to follow. So I gave out to you what was called an outline. Little did I know that's very unusual that somebody would give out a speech and then go totally off speech. Because I didn't go off speech on Mexico; I want off speech on virtually everything. And I got great reviews on the speech.

And then what happened is, about a week later, they said whoa. The whole thing on Mexico did not happen. If you remember, it did not happen.

[Interruption]

Donald Trump: It was strange because I actually got very good reviews on the speech. I was given good reviews on the speech. Although it was interesting because a couple of us that were sitting here reading the speech, it didn't not only having to do with Mexico, it didn't conform in any way, shape, or form.

Donald Trump: It was weird because I said, wait a minute, I made that speech a week ago. I had actually made two other speeches after that and nobody said anything. I thought that was strange. And what they hit was the illegal immigration. No question about it. And the statements on Mexico and the statements on pretty much on Mexico was a big thing. And if you read what I'm saying, Mexico sending, well, I happen to believe it. I have very good relationships with Mexico. I have great relationships with the Mexican people. I have thousands of employees and have had thousands of employees who are Hispanic.

In Nevada, you saw that I won the poll on the exit polls. Wherever they do the exit polls, I seem to win. In fact, I guess it was a poll recently where I'm ahead of Mitt Romney. You saw that where I'm ahead with the Hispanics of Mitt Romney. I'm one point above him. And I haven't started yet. But I think I'm going to do actually very well with this but --

Male Interviewer: When you started to get the blowback on that.

Donald Trump: About a week later.

Male Interviewer: Yeah. You're new to politics --

Donald Trump: And by the way, and that was serious blowback.

Male Interviewer: That's what I mean.

Donald Trump: In fact, I said, wait a minute. How long do we have until the general election? Because if this is the case, that was beyond anything. And I've been a very public person for a long time. That was blowback like I've never had before. And I said to myself, let's see, it's June, so we had a-year-and-a-half before the general. I said is everyday going to be like this? I was being inundated. We're having hundreds of calls.

Male Interviewer: And then you were in a fight with Univision over it. And then you were in a fight with --

Donald Trump: Well, the Univision turned out to be excellent because I ended up selling the Miss Universe contest because of that whole thing. I probably wouldn't have sold it; it was a great number.

Male Interviewer: Right. But you were in a number of things which it was affecting your business relationships.

Donald Trump: Sure. It affected Macy's. I had a deal with Macy's, not a big deal but it's a deal. The head of Macy's was one of my best friends named Terry Lundgren.

Male Interviewer: Did you think at that point --

Donald Trump: And he bailed on me and I said, wow. And I haven't spoken to him since. But he bailed on me. I couldn't believe it. I actually couldn't believe it. And I said, what's the big deal? He said, "Well, you know, the Mexicans are planning to boycott." I said, "You had boycotts before. They last for about two hours and forget it." "Are they're going to picket the store." And the ties did well. The shirts did well. But it wasn't a big business or anything.

Male Interviewer: Did it give you any second thoughts about maybe this is really not the right thing for me to do?

Donald Trump: No. I have to do what I have to do. It turned out I was right. Illegal immigration is turning out to be one of the truly big stories of this campaign. You know that better than I do. So it turned out I was right.

Male Interviewer: But at that moment, were you convinced of it? Or did you have to --

Donald Trump: No. I didn't know. I didn't know. I'll tell you what, Dan. I got hit so hard. And it was sort of like the delayed. Did you ever watched George Foreman knocking out -- when he hit Joe Frazier, where he hit him? And about two seconds later, Joe went up in the air. It's almost like a spring. He hit him. You know what I'm talking about.

Male Interviewer: Yeah. I do remember now, yeah.

Donald Trump: It was weird because it would've been one thing if it was the day after the speech. But it was a week later. It's almost like people started reading the speech a week later. And that was really, really brutal. A couple of weeks went by and then what happened is people started looking at the incredible crime statistics, how bad it is.

In fact, let me -- could I have the report on Mexico, please, that I just got? You've got to see this report. It's unbelievable.

Female Interviewer: When did you know that that was a message that resonates? Was it when you got the first batch of polling back or out of --

Donald Trump: Well, that's a very good question.

Male Interviewer: Or the Phoenix?

Female Interviewer: -- or the Phoenix probably?

Donald Trump: I've had three or four moments where that's the end, that's the end. It's over. I end up getting polls go higher.

Female Interviewer: Do you think it was over?

Donald Trump: Here's Mexico travel warning. You take it back and read it. "U.S. citizens have been victims of vicious crimes, violent crimes such as homicide, kidnapping, carjacking, robbery by organized criminal groups in various Mexican states. This is just out.

Male Interviewer: From whom to whom?

Donald Trump: United States Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs. "The Mexico-U.S. traveler should be aware that the Mexican government has been engaged in extensive to counter organized criminal groups." This just came out recently. It's unbelievable. I'm going to leave it. You can have it here.

Male Interviewer: All right.

Donald Trump: And basically this was infiltrating --
[Unrelated conversation regarding interview scheduling]

Donald Trump: So it turned out that I was right. And then you had the killing of Kate in San Francisco, and the killing of Jamiel, and the killing of so many people, and the horrible situation. And all of a sudden, people said he's right. And people knew I was right. And you're going to have tremendous numbers of liberals in Los Angeles, because I'm going to make a very strong play for California, which no other Republican would even think about.

A friend of mine called up. And he goes, "You're going to get every liberal in Los Angeles voting for you because they're tired of the crime and the problems and everything else, you know?" People that never voted Republican before, they're going to vote for me. You watch. So I'm going to make a play for California. No other Republican --

I'm going to make a play for New York. You saw my numbers in the thing. Don't forget, again, even though it's down to three, three people, when you get 62 percent and when you've won every single county and you've won everything. In Pennsylvania, every county. In Maryland, in Connecticut, I won virtually -- I think all of them was every county of every state.

Male Interviewer: I think there may be six counties that you didn't win.

Donald Trump: Well, you check it out but pretty close to it.

Male Interviewer: You're right.

Donald Trump: I'll say almost every county of every state, nothing like that has ever happened before. So I'm going to make a heavy play for New York. And one of the things I tell people, one of the things I've been saying to people is that let's say Ted Cruz got in or somebody else. They have their six states they have to win. Boom, boom, like cookie cutters, right? And if they lose one of them, it's gone. I think I have 15 or 17 maybe.

I was in the state of Washington. We had turnouts like you wouldn't believe a week-and-a-half ago. Now, I was told the state of Washington is not in play for a Republican but I think it's in play for me.

Female Interviewer: And just like --

Donald Trump: I may be wrong. Again, famous last words, I may be wrong. You'll tell me. Go ahead, Jenna.

Female Interviewer: It felt like the blowback to your proposed Muslim ban was another one of these moments.

Donald Trump: But not like the original.

Female Interviewer: Right.

Donald Trump: In fact, I was asking my people the other day, Jenna. So I've had blowback from a lot. The blowback from the initial assault on Mexico -- and it wasn't an assault. I said they are sending. It's true. The government of Mexico is very smart. They don't want them. People are being sent. In other words, instead of being here, go ahead to the United States. Let them take you.

Male Interviewer: What was the difference on the Muslims ban frame?

Donald Trump: It just wasn't as intense nearly.

Female Interviewer: And a lot of people think that it was just kind of a quick decision, but there were several days of planning that went into announcing this.

Donald Trump: No. It's a fairly quick decision.

Female Interviewer: Okay. Yeah. Tell me a little about how you came to this.

Donald Trump: It was a decision that I made on the boat as you know. It was a decision not on the boat -- going, you know, a couple of days before.

Male Interviewer: But it was time for Pearl Harbor Day.

Donald Trump: It was time for --

Male Interviewer: Pearl Harbor.

Donald Trump: Yeah, it was in that vicinity. But honestly, Pearl Harbor but it wasn't really having to do with that. I think that was much more of a coincidence than anything else.

[Interruption]

Donald Trump: Well, yeah, the Paris and the San Bernardino. And then you start adding up the World Trade Center and lots of other places all over the world. We're not talking about a United States problem.

Male Interviewer: But was this something that just kind of came to you? We have to do something and here's what we have to do?

Donald Trump: Yes, it was. It absolutely was. I said we have a problem. We have a president that won't even mention the term. And we had San Bernardino where they were radicalized. They became radicalized. He probably became radicalized by her. And they killed 14 coworkers that had previously given them a shower party for their baby, a baby shower for the baby. And a

wedding shower. And they were friendly, they worked there, and they killed them. And they killed more -- they had many people still in the hospital. And then you had the horror show of Paris where 130 people killed and many, many people in the hospital right now that will never fully be able to recover. And obviously many other things, many other things.

So I said something has to be done. So I said we're going to call for a temporary ban on them coming in. And you also had the whole thing with the migration starting to form where people are starting to think about let's let a lot of people come in from Syria, even though we know nothing about them, who they are, et cetera, et cetera. But they do have cellphones. And they do have ISIS flags on some of those cellphones. And you say, what are we doing? I don't know if you know but a lot of the cellphones had the ISIS flag on them. And we let them into our country. So I said it's time we get smart.

Female Interviewer: And the first statement that came out --

Donald Trump: What did you think was more this way of the two?

Male Interviewer: Well, I thought that there was a visceral reaction on the statement about Mexico. And part of it was because you were a brand new candidate. I thought that the

reaction on the Muslim ban in a sense crystalized a certain opposition to your candidacy and that it became very intense.

Donald Trump: It was intense.

Male Interviewer: That you were prepared to say things that no other candidate had been prepared to say. And a lot of people thought it was way beyond that.

Donald Trump: And by the way, I've had candidates tell me confidentially - two candidates, maybe three, three candidates - said you're so right on the Muslim thing but I'm never saying it. I've had three candidates say it. And again, I didn't do it for this reason.

[Interruption]

I will say and I don't know that you remember the moment, but I said it and I guess I said until we find out what the hell is going on, because it was so bad. And it wasn't just -- it was Paris and San Bernardino and many other things in different other countries. Obviously, every day you pick up the paper, you have another event happening. And it was also the hatred. There's tremendous hatred. You look at ISIS, the whole thing is like your basic disaster.

And I made the statement. The room jumped up. You can get the tape. There's a massive room on the carrier. We set the all-time record for attendance on that boat. This room was packed. It shows you I was strong, right? The place was

packed. There were thousands of people outside. They couldn't get on the aircraft carrier. And they couldn't get on. And I said it and the place went crazy, they jumped up.

Like when I did the raising of the hand, you know, it was woo, woo, woo. But it was fun and everyone was laughing and we're having a good time. This was the place jumped up in the air. They were going crazy.

[Interruption]

Then you guys wrote it. Meaning, the press wrote it.

Male Interviewer: So here's a question related to that. You saw the kind of reaction of the pundit class or part of your Republican establishment either attacking you or reservations.

Donald Trump: A lot of them attacked and didn't believe it probably.

Male Interviewer: Right. But at the same time, you're seeing the reaction among people you talked to.

Donald Trump: Right.

Male Interviewer: What does that tell you? Does that give you confidence as a candidate that you understand something that so-called smart people don't?

Donald Trump: Well, I gained that before because I must tell you, I've had good instincts in life, and a lot of this is instinct. You talked about three moments of -- I mean, I could tell you, one was when Charles Krauthammer and others, many

others said this is the single most talented field of candidates ever assembled in the history of the Republican Party. They said that. One said since World War II. It's a long time. But they said, literally, there has never been a group of such talented people. This is the single greatest group of people. And I hadn't announced yet. I'm saying what am I doing? These people are saying this group. Why am I doing this? Because I don't know most of these people. But I did it anyway. And now, I say, really? Tell me about it.

So you have to go by your own instinct. You can't listen to the pundits. I mean, I watched this poor guy, this poor, sad guy who's on television all the time talking about the party, the magazine. What's his name? Bill Kristol. I watched this poor guy. He's called it wrong for two years. "Trump will never run. He's never going to run. It won't happen. He won't run. He won't run." I'm running. Then, "He'll never file papers. It won't happen. It won't happen. And if he does, he'll ask for two 45-day extensions." I filed my papers. Whereas, guys with a one-day financial page asked for extensions, I didn't and I have over a hundred pages.

I watched these people. And they're sad. I mean, he's a sad guy. I watched him the other day on television, "Well, we haven't given up." But here's a guy who has been wrong about me for a-year-and-a-half from before I ever announced. "He'll

never announce. It won't happen. He'll never file his papers." Then I filed my papers. My papers are great.

By the way, those papers, I filed my new ones and I got pretty rave reviews on that. I have very little debt. I have phenomenal assets. Those are the papers you'll learn something about somebody. You don't learn them from tax returns just so you understand. And I'll file my tax returns when the audits are finished, and they're routine audits. But those are the papers, Dan, that you'll learn something. I filed, I guess, it's over 100 pages -

One hundred and four pages of deal after deal after deal. Good ones. They don't even talk about, oh, this one on page 87 maybe wasn't so good. I actually take good deals. I've taken what should be bad deals because the market collapsed and made them great deals, sometimes better than if the market didn't collapse.

Male Interviewer: When was the point where you said to yourself, you know, I could win this?

Donald Trump: That's the question. I think it was probably day one because I wouldn't have done it if I thought I wouldn't win. I mean, I wouldn't have done it -- I didn't do it as an exercise.

Male Interviewer: But you go into it saying I'm not going to get into this if I don't think I can win. But then you're in competition. At some point --

Donald Trump: I think it's fine. I think I wouldn't have done it -- you never know about this. My wife said to me -- my wife is a very smart person. She was very successful before, you know. But she knows me well and she sees me. She sees me out. She said, "You know if you run, you're going to win, don't you?" I said, "No, I don't know that." She said, "I will tell you, if you run you're going to win. But you can't just say you're going to run. You can't just say, 'I'm going to run' but not announce you're going to run." And the polls were not doing me because I did so well in the polls four years before, and then I said I wasn't going to run. So very few people polled me.

When I did poll, I didn't do that well. I was down to 3 percent. And Melania said, "That doesn't mean anything." I said, "What do you mean? That's a poll." She said, "No, no. They don't believe you're going to run." And let me just tell you - and she was very strong at this. She said, "If you run you're going to win. I have no doubt about it." And I said, "Well, now they polled me." She said, "No, no, they don't believe -- even though it said 'if Donald Trump runs.' And even if they said Donald Trump will run, they still don't believe."

She said, "You have to get up and announce you're going to run." Not that she wanted me to run. She would have preferred the life we had.

Male Interviewer: So are you saying that in August once you went ahead on the polls, you said, "I know I'm going to run"? Or was it --

Donald Trump: No. I think when I won New Hampshire.

Male Interviewer: New Hampshire.

Donald Trump: Yeah. Because I won a state that Bush was expected to win easily. He was up there. That was sort of his. It was always Bush territory, right? From day one, he was going to win New Hampshire. I think that that was a big factor. I think even when I saw the polls, when I saw the ratings for television, when I saw that, in the history of cable television, it was the highest rating, I knew they weren't there to watch Jeb, okay? That was an indication. And then a couple of weeks later, CNN gets 23 million people. And that's the highest rating in the history of CNN. That's a big history. It's a pretty important history in all fairness with what they cover especially with the [cross-talking].

Male Interviewer: Why didn't you say to yourself, well, they're watching because I'm a reality TV star, not because they want me to be president.

Donald Trump: I didn't feel that. You're right. I guess I should have said that. I didn't feel that. And *Variety*. It's all over the place. *Variety* said, "The Trump debate." They called it, "The Trump debate scores record ratings." Then two weeks later, "The Trump debate gives CNN its biggest to date." They only referred to them as the Trump debate.

And, you know, years before those debates used to be an afterthought. There weren't even things that got decent ratings on television. In fact, there was a point where the FCC made the television networks put them on. The networks didn't even want the debates. And now they've become like massive television.

They say the debate, if it's Trump and Hillary, is going to be Super Bowl numbers. It will be the highest -- you know what, which is a good thing for the country because the country has always had malaise. It's never been the voter turnout. They say voter turnout will be the highest in the history of the country. That's a good thing. And they say that the debate will get the highest numbers, I mean it will be like massive numbers.

Male Interviewer: How do you explain that? And also, when we look at these poll numbers that you and she are the two least popular nominees that we've ever had?

Donald Trump: Well, I think in my case, it's because number one, I don't believe the numbers. But I think in my case it's because popularity is not important as competence. I believe that as an example, I'm going to do very well with women. You've seen where they voted and you had polls. Look at the women votes like the exit polls, because they want strength, they want strong borders, they want a strong military. They want strength. They want terrorism ended. I do great on all of the military questions, all of the military, all of the security questions. And women want that. They want that.

And if you look at the polls, like CNN does these massive polls where they talk about everything, I do the best on military, the best on the borders, the best, all of these things. And I think that far outweighs -- I oftentimes tell the story about a woman that came up to me. She said, "Mr. Trump, I like you so much but you have to be nicer." I said this election has nothing to do with nice. This has to do with competence. And the people are tired of incompetent people.

Hillary, essentially, is incompetent. I will say that. She may have experience but you look at her decisions -- and I was totally against the Iraq War. They like to say, well, on Howard Stern -- that was while before the war started. And even then, I was, I don't know. That's the first time I was ever asked the question. Don't forget, I'm a businessman. Nobody is

asking me about the Iraq War. But Howard is a friend of mine. If you go back to 2004, I was strongly against that war. And I was against it before it ever started because I said it's going to destabilize the Middle East. And Hillary voted for it. But beyond that -- because maybe she was given bad information. Beyond that -- because I said it was going to destabilize the Middle East. Everything I said was exactly right.

Iran will take over Iraq. Everything I said that's happening. You saw the mess two weeks ago when they walked into their halls [sounds like]. I mean, the place is a total mess. And they will take over among the largest oil reserves in the world when they do that.

So I think that it's just worked out. And now, if you say, do I think it could have worked out to this extent because this extent has been a big -- this is beyond like winning. I thought I could win by a neck on the last day maybe. I had no idea that I'd be sitting home watching Hillary Clinton fighting for her life.

Male Interviewer: You alluded to feeling as though you didn't get enough credit in Wisconsin. But that was an important loss and you obviously --

Donald Trump: It made me fight harder in New Hampshire. I'm sorry, it made me fight harder in my next group of contests.

Male Interviewer: You must have been down that night.

Donald Trump: Well, sometimes I don't have time to get down. But I think I was not given -- two events took place which were interesting. I think I've been treated very unfairly throughout the process. But I think I did really well in Iowa although I should have won. And it made me realize that management -- it's not just the voters going in. It made me realize that management of an election is very important. Because I'm telling you, I had more voters walking through those doors wanting to vote for Trump than Ted Cruz. But he had a massive group of people inside grabbing everybody and giving lots of false stories of my positions and bringing them over. For whatever reason, I didn't have that. So I learned something.

But I still came in a strong second. And it's 17 people. So I came in second then I was like, "Trump loses." I came in second. But Rubio - you remember that story - Rubio became a star because of that. And the other one was Wisconsin. I had great audiences in Wisconsin. We had tremendous crowds. I thought I was going to win Wisconsin. Everybody said you can't because the governor and the machine were against you. You had the five radio hosts that were against you. It was a whole lot of things we were against. But I had the biggest crowds by far. And I thought, okay, so I got almost 36 percent.

Male Interviewer: But that's a case in which you're instincts failed.

Donald Trump: They didn't fail me.

Male Interviewer: But I mean your instincts were wrong. You thought you were going to win, you didn't.

Donald Trump: I thought I did very well in both places considering, and I wasn't [cross-talking].

Male Interviewer: But you're somebody who knows the difference between a win and a loss. And if you're at 36 and your opponent is at 44 or 45, that's a loss, right?

Donald Trump: I know. But when they said I lost, it was like I didn't exist. And you still had numerous people in the event.

Male Interviewer: But wasn't part of that that gave life to the Never Trump Movement?

Donald Trump: Correct.

Male Interviewer: That night --

Donald Trump: No, no. The Never Trump Movement spent \$12 million on that campaign. I spent zero. I spent almost nothing.

Male Interviewer: No. But I mean they came out of Wisconsin.

Donald Trump: It gave them a glimmer of hope.

Male Interviewer: That's what I'm saying.

Donald Trump: Oh yeah, it gave them hope. It gave them hope.

Male Interviewer: So what was your reaction on that?

Donald Trump: And the hope was taken away the next week when I came to New York. I'll tell you New York -- I love New York. And New York we blew them out. And then we had the five states right after that, Pennsylvania and Maryland and Connecticut and Delaware, Rhode Island. And I just blew them out everywhere, every one of them. And then, of course, you had the watershed or as they call it, the firewall of Indiana which was going to be a total victory for Ted Cruz. And I ended up winning the evangelical vote and winning all sorts of things that he was hoping to win.

That same thing happened in South Carolina, by the way. I went to South Carolina and totally blew everyone out. And I won the evangelicals. So I won the South. I won in South Carolina and I won with the evangelicals and blew them away. I mean, it's been an amazing period of time.

Male Interviewer: You did that in South Carolina after calling the last Republican president of the United States a liar.

Donald Trump: Correct. Well, I didn't call him a liar. I didn't call him a liar. I did two things. Yeah, I did three things. Number one, the Pope came out against me. Because he

said, you said a wall. Well, that's because he was in Mexico that week and the Mexican leaders don't want the wall because that will stop them from continuing to rip us off and sending the wrong people and sending the drugs and sending whatever. They don't want a wall. So I had the Pope come out. In fact, I remember when Hope and Corey and a whole group came. "Could we see you?" "What happened?" "The Pope." I said, "The Pope? What has the Pope have to do with South Carolina?" "He just said some bad things about you." I said, "The Pope?" And the next day, it was a front page story.

Male Interviewer: So you knew what he had said before you responded?

Donald Trump: Yeah, I did. And we put out a very strong statement.

Female Interviewer: But not exactly. It's not exactly what he had said.

Donald Trump: No. I just knew that the Pope just came out. I said what is it?

Female Interviewer: You just knew that there was something negative that you [cross-talking].

Donald Trump: Actually, the way it was basically, the Pope just said something about you. I said, the Pope? Yeah. Where is the Pope? He's in Mexico. I said, is it good news or bad news? They said it's bad news. That's the way it was. I said,

is it good news or bad news? And they said it's bad news. I said, what is it? That's when they told me what it was.

And then I immediately thought of the Vatican with the massive walls. I said, well, wait a minute, he's got the bigger walls. He's got walls like you couldn't even dream of. So it was sort of strange. The Pope actually came out with a very second statement which was absolutely -- because he was given a lot of false information by the Mexican government.

Female Interviewer: Why hit him that hard? Why not just wait a little bit to see exactly --

Donald Trump: I didn't hit him.

Female Interviewer: Or come out and defend yourself [cross-talking].

Donald Trump: But Jenna, I had an election. I had the Pope coming out. I thought this was not -- so anyway, that was one thing. So I had three things. I had the Pope which worked out fine because just before -- and he came out and released a statement that really brought it down a big notch.

Then I made the statement about Bush and I talked about two things. Number one, during the debate I talked -- when he [Jeb] said, "My brother kept us safe." I said, really? What about the World Trade Center coming down? And for some reason, he's been absolved of that. It was like the paperclip. It's very, very simple but only one person made money with it, right? He

was always known as the president that kept us safe. And Jeb would hit me at the debates -- two times at the Reagan Library. And again, at the next debate, I said I got to do it. I didn't want to do it. I got to do it. Because he said, "My brother kept us safe."

And at the Reagan Library, I said I got to let him get away with it. And you know the funny thing, nobody thinks of that. Nobody even thought of that. And at the debate I said the next time -- he said it two or three times. Then I said I'm sorry. I have to do this. I said what about the World Trade Center? The single greatest tragedy in the history -- attack in the history of this country. Worse than Pearl Harbor because you were attacking civilians? And the whole audience went like, I can't believe it. And I said it. I've tried to give him the benefit but he kept saying it. And I told him backstage once, I said, Jeb, be careful with that because your brother has some issues.

And then I talked to him about getting us sent to the wars. I said your brother got us sent to the war in Iraq, one of the worst decisions ever made. That was during South Carolina. Well, that stuff happened: the Pope, the World Trade Center, and the other.

Then Nikki Haley wanted this one and they've all taken their candidates. And I had the lieutenant governor, who was

fantastic, by the way, for with me. He was really great. He worked hard. That guy was great. But Nikki Haley came out in favor of Marco Rubio. Trey Gowdy came out in favor of Marco Rubio. Rubio was getting tremendous endorsements. And Ted Cruz was expected to win South Carolina. I end up winning in a landslide.

Male Interviewer: Did anybody on your team say to you after that debate, Mr. Trump, you might have a problem in a state like this where the Bushes are popular, going that hard after President Bush?

Donald Trump: More than one person, I can tell you that. Many, many people said -- there were people that said you just blew the state. I said I have to be honest. I have to be honest. And because it's a military state, a lot of soldiers, sailors, and I said I have to be honest. I have to be true to myself, okay? And you can't keep making statements that go unchallenged like Jeb was doing. By the way, when I said that, he went, huh. His response was so bad. So I made those statements. And as you know I won South Carolina going away.

Male Interviewer: And every delegate.

Donald Trump: And every single delegate. Every single delegate.

Male Interviewer: Jeb was the person when you started out that you felt this was the guy I've got to beat.

Donald Trump: I think the one -- that's why I announced the same -- a few hours after him. In other words, he announced he was going to run. And I think that if you ask me to go back in time, I think that I felt that Jeb would be the one because he had \$168 million in a super PAC. He was going around. Remember, he was sort of late in announcing. And then I announced the following day after him. And honestly --

Male Interviewer: That was deliberate to do it right then?

Donald Trump: Well, perhaps instinctively as opposed to a brilliant plan. But it really took away a lot of his publicity. I don't know that that was the biggest thing. But I mean he really got -- because I tell you what -- were you here when I announced?

Male Interviewer: No, I was not.

Donald Trump: You have never seen so many candidates.

Male Interviewer: I had been to Jeb's. And I was going through O'Hare. I was at your Iowa rally that night, that day.

Donald Trump: Right.

Male Interviewer: So I watched you at O'Hare --

Donald Trump: It wiped him off the papers. I mean it really -- you know I get a lot of this stuff. But you have never seen so many cameras. You were here?

Female Interviewer: No, I wasn't.

Donald Trump: You couldn't get anybody in the building. There was so much press. It's a big building. So that was one of those things. But there were a lot of moments. I mean, I had a lot of --

Male Interviewer: How did you come up with Low Energy Jeb?

Donald Trump: I just came up with it. I just came up with it. I mean, we came up with some good ones.

Male Interviewer: But I mean you know branding?

Donald Trump: I do. I just felt he was a low energy candidate. I deal with the Chinese a lot. I do very well with the Chinese. [Unrelated conversation regarding next interview] Yes, I have to go. I've got to go. Set up another meeting if you want.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Donald Trump: I really enjoyed this.

Female Interviewer: Yeah. This has been very helpful. Thank you so much.

Donald Trump: Thank you very much.

Female Interviewer: Yes. Nice to see you.

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