

PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES  
THIRD PARTY/NON-VOTERS FOCUS GROUP  
HOUSTON, TEXAS  
APRIL 18, 2017  
8:00 P.M.

*Note: first names were changed in the transcripts to protect the confidentiality of the participants. For instance, if the moderator called on "Sally" by name, that appears in the transcript as "woman."*

MODERATOR: Well, good evening. My name is Glen. I'll be your moderator this evening. Tonight you're participating in a focus group discussion. These kinds of group discussions are held all across the country on everything from politics to policies to consumer products like Coke and Pepsi.

Tonight, as you probably figured out from the questions they asked when they called to see if you could come tonight, we're going to be talking mostly about politics and policy. And before we get started though, I'd like to just kind of describe how things are going to go tonight. First of all, as you can see from the cleverly disguised microphone on the ceiling, this is being taped. That's for my benefit. I do these all over the country. I just did a group earlier here. The last few weeks, I've been in six different cities doing focus groups as well.

So, don't take it personally, in a couple of weeks I'm not going to remember what you said anyhow, so I need to refer back to the transcripts. And if I use anything from the transcript, a quote or anything, because it will just be male or female, I'll just say a male or a Houston male or a Houston female.

Also, as you probably figured out, that's a two-way mirror. The only, you know, sometimes the people who hire us come and watch. The only person back there is my colleague, Kyle. You probably saw Kyle kind of moving around before anyhow. He may send me a text to say ask this or follow up on that. But, for the most part, he's just back there because it would be awkward for two of us to be sitting here asking you questions.

Also, if they didn't mention it to you, could you please turn off your cell phone just so that we don't have any interruptions during the group? I get to leave mine on, although mine is on silent, and I, that's just for the texts. Let's see. So there are no right or wrong answers. We want your opinions. That's why we're paying you to participate this evening.

So, you know, it's please feel free to speak up. If somebody else is talking, I ask that you wait for them to finish. It's not school. You don't have to raise your hand. But do, you

know, if you want to . . . catch my eye, make sure I get to you, or when somebody else is done, just go ahead and jump right in. If you've been quiet for a while, I may call on you directly by name to get you back into the conversation. And if you've been talking a lot, I may ask you to hold off just to make sure we get to hear from everybody. And it doesn't mean you won't get to get your thoughts in, but I may ask you to just make sure we get to hear from others.

The only other time I might do it is, you know, my goal is to get you out of here on time, no later than 10:00, maybe a little bit earlier depending on how things go. But from time to time I may say something like, man, you get the last word on this, and then we, you know, move onto the next topic.

And I ask that there be no side conversations. You know, sometimes the person next to you is done talking, and you want to lean over and say, I agree with you or something like that. Believe it or not, it's louder than you think it is, and it's distracting to the group as a whole. If you need to use the restroom during the group, that's fine. My only request is that only one person go out at a time, otherwise, you know, if we have a huge exodus, it's, you know, the people who are here, a little more time from them or at the, so that's usually not a factor anyhow.

I'm trying to think. Oh, I don't have any opinions in this. My job is to ask questions. Sometimes you'll see me nodding my head as you're talking. It doesn't mean that I agree with you. It just means that I'm listening. If I don't do it, it doesn't mean I'm not listening. It's just something I do sometimes. Other times, I don't.

Every so often, I may throw out a different perspective just to play devil's advocate. If you hear it, and you say, yeah, I hadn't thought about that, and it impacts you, you know, go ahead and say something. If it doesn't, don't say, you know, don't say something just for my own self-esteem, my wife will tell you I've got plenty of that. So, you know, it's more to see whether you have any specific thoughts on that. I

I'd like to start with a very basic question. I'd like to hear from all ten of you. And that is, if you could use one word or short phrase to describe how you think things are going in the country these days, what one word or short phrase would you use? So I'll just jot them down.

MAN: Backwards.

MODERATOR: Backwards. Okay.

MAN: Consistent.

MODERATOR: Consistent. Okay.

WOMAN: Combative.

MODERATOR: Combative.

MAN: Poorly.

MODERATOR: Poorly.

MAN: Petty.

MODERATOR: Petty.

WOMAN: Confusing.

MODERATOR: I'm sorry?

WOMAN: Confusing.

MODERATOR: Confusing. Okay. Sorry.

MAN: Chaotic.

MODERATOR: I've heard from seven of you, so three . . .

WOMAN: Well, my first word is crazy. I think it's just all things crazy.

MODERATOR: Crazy. Okay.

WOMAN: What's another word for crazy?

MODERATOR: Well, crazy times two. And then one person we haven't heard from yet. Who hasn't spoken up yet?

MAN: I haven't. It's just another continuation of big government.

MODERATOR: All right. Somebody said backwards to start us off. Who said that? Was that you, man? Okay. Tell us a little bit why backwards comes to mind.

MAN: Well, I guess, deregulation. The regulations were put in place for a reason, and now we're going backwards and cycling through like everything. History repeats itself.

MODERATOR: Okay. Consistent, somebody said that.

MAN: Yeah. I did. Because, you know, the Presidents, although they have a lot of power in a certain sense, they are limited in other regards, so I don't really think that the country has changed that much.

MODERATOR: Okay. Combative?

WOMAN: That would be me. I think views have gotten so polarized, and I think, partly, it's the media. But there is no middle ground on anything. You're either pro-life, or

you're pro-choice, and there's nothing in the middle. But, in fact, everybody has a slightly different opinion of how that should go, and it's beyond all the time. We hear that kind of argument all the time. And I don't care whether it's the taxes or big government, little government, nanny state, or regulations. There's no middle ground. There's no way to come to a compromise, and that's what politics is about is compromising with the different viewpoints.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you. We had poorly.

MAN: That was me. Well, probably, you have like one big, ethno-nationalist fascist at the helm of the largest country on earth, so that's probably not a great, solid choice.

MODERATOR: Okay. Petty?

MAN: That was me. It seems like a lot of times we lose sight of the issues that we should actually be discussed and nothing gets done. They insult each other. They . . . stifle the issues that we really need to go over.

MODERATOR: Okay. And then we had confusing.

WOMAN: That's me. I think I see all of the different filters that news comes from, all the different mediums that it comes out of. And if you watch one story on one news, you know, station and then watch it on a different news station, you might hear two completely different things, same facts, different way of saying it.

So it's, I feel like, as a citizen, it's really confusing, like I have to go and do a lot of digging and find out. Before I, you know, get an opinion, I have to do a lot of digging. I can't just trust my news to tell me what's actually happening. So it feels really confusing, similar to what woman said, very polarizing. And I get that even from friends and family. I have people who are on one side and on the other, and it's, they see the exact same situation in two totally different ways, and they report it to me in two totally different ways, so it's a little confusing.

MODERATOR: Okay. Chaotic?

MAN: Well, in addition to what she said and woman said, you don't actually get the facts from the news. You get opinions. There's facts laced through a lot of it. This happened and this happened. But it's all the other stuff that is opinion. It's not really news. It's not just pure facts.

And so, in addition to everything that's been said, it's true, you can't, there's no middle ground. One party proposes something maybe really good. The other party is not going to, they're not going to say, yeah, it's good, because that's now how politics work these days. So

it's just pure chaos with between the government, foreign policy. Everything right now, to me, is just chaotic.

MODERATOR: Okay. Crazy?

WOMAN: Well, the way I feel like is in my home, in my whole lifetime, I've never had so many, heard so many, you know, bad things about the President and all the crazy stuff that's going on. It's every single day, and it's something every single, like he didn't, you know, raise his hand for the when they were singing the national anthem, just all kinds of things like that. You never heard all that before, you know, when you had other Presidents, I don't think. So I just think it's kind of nuts.

MODERATOR: Okay. And then, woman, you also said crazy.

WOMAN: I mean, I see a lot of crazy with, you know, families being torn apart, mine in particular, and it's, you know, this side or this side. And it causes a lot of friction, for one thing, where, you know, families don't want to get together anymore because of this topic, and it's ridiculous, you know, just seeing how many individuals are given power that don't have the experience. And, I mean, it seems like money talks. And, honestly, I've wanted to jump ship. I don't want to, you know, I don't want to be in this country anymore.

MODERATOR: Okay. And then, I think, man, you said, do you go by man or man?

MAN: Yeah. That's correct.

MODERATOR: You said continuation of big government.

MAN: Well, just, for the past 100 years we've had a debasement of the currency, and it really doesn't matter whether you have a Democrat at the helm or a Republican at the helm, they both believe in spending money, just in different manners, where the Republicans spend on military, and the Democrats spend on social, you know, welfare programs.

If our forefathers, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, were alive, they'd be, you know, turning over in their grave. The whole purpose of this country was to get away from taxation from England. The first 150 years, we didn't have any taxes in this country. The government has just grown like a cancer.

MODERATOR: Okay. Let me ask you this. Thinking about the economy, compared to a year ago, would you say the, and I just want to see a show of hands, here's the

three options, and then we'll talk about it, the government, I'm sorry, the economy is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

How many think the economy is getting better compared to a year ago? One, two, three. Okay. How many think it is getting worse compared to a year ago? One. And how many think it's staying about the same? Everybody else. Okay. Those of you who say it's getting better, the three of you who said it's getting better, what are some of the reasons it feels to you like the economy is getting better?

WOMAN: My 401(k).

MAN: Well, it's true the stock market's gone up. You know, and just in my circle I feel like I know fewer people who aren't employed, things of that nature.

WOMAN: I was going to say the housing market. We bought a house a couple of years ago, and it's just, it's getting harder and harder to find what we bought at our price. And that tells me that more people are buying houses than there's, or there's more people who have that money available. And it seems like the banks are getting a little bit smarter about loaning money, so, hopefully, that signals that things are getting better.

MODERATOR: Okay. Man, when you say you think things are getting worse, what signs do you see?

MAN: Well, the current economic reports that came out are the last acts of Obama before Trump's economy starts to report. So we had like super good economies that reported, and we haven't actually seen what Trump's economy has done to the world yet. I mean, unemployment is at a sharp increase, which everything else just kind of falls right down . . . from there . . . to the working people.

MODERATOR: So you're seeing in this, in April you're seeing unemployment going up.

MAN: Yeah.

MODERATOR: Okay. Those of you who say it's staying about the same, is that because things are good but not getting better, or things are just kind of so-so and staying there? Woman?

WOMAN: It's kind of so-so. Just, I mean, you know, I haven't really seen any difference. I've, you know, my nephew sells cars, and he still has the same trouble selling cars, and where we work, it's like they act like we don't make any money. But I don't think people are

spending. You know, I think they're spending just like they were, you know . . . seem too much better or anything.

MODERATOR: Okay. Anybody else in terms of, yeah, it's kind of about the same, and what does that mean to you, or what do you, why are you saying that?

MAN: Well, like I said, they're . . . the economy has been very weak for many, many years due to the government mismanagement of the currency.

MODERATOR: Okay. Let me ask this. Putting economy and jobs aside, what other domestic issue, not foreign policy stuff but domestic stuff, concerns you most right now?

MAN: We have a sharp increase in membership in white power organizations and a sharp increase in terrorist attacks by white power people.

MODERATOR: Okay. Other issues?

MAN: I'd say education or the militarization of the police.

MAN: Marijuana laws.

MODERATOR: In what way?

MAN: Decriminalizing the use in policy that came out. That's one as far as local, but even states that are decriminalizing it.

MODERATOR: Okay. Other concerns you've got?

WOMAN: Equal rights. I don't know, you know, were going backwards now . . .

MODERATOR: Okay. In what way?

WOMAN: You know, I mean, to me it seems like with the passing of the gay, of the marriages, you know, being legalized, I mean, I feel like it's only a matter of time before that's axed. It just, I mean, I think that there's a lot of tension in the community, a lot of fear.

WOMAN: Definitely. Yeah. I was going to say, you know, there's, it seems like because of the person that we have elected at this moment, that there is fear among my friends that are LGBT, that their rights will be taken away. I have some friends that are in different religious and ethnic groups who are feeling the same fears. And then, as a woman, it feels like we're going a little bit backwards, having somebody in the office who thinks so little of the female gender. And it feels like equality could have been on the horizon, and that that's probably taking a back seat for a while.

MODERATOR: Okay. How about globally, what international, foreign policy issue are you most concerned about right now?

MAN: North Korea.

WOMAN: Yeah. North Korea.

MAN: The French elections also are somewhat concerning because if they end up leaving the EU too, that could collapse, and that could make everything very unstable.

MODERATOR: Okay. Other foreign policy issues?

MAN: U.N. . . . like visiting Europe, and that will just make it a pain in the ass.

MAN: Terrorism.

MODERATOR: Terrorism.

WOMAN: Travel bans.

MODERATOR: Travel bans. Okay. Anything else?

MAN: Assad getting rid of all other political parties besides his own.

MODERATOR: Okay. As you probably figured out from the conversation when they called you, a lot of the discussion is going to focus on, tonight is going to focus on both the 2016 election and also the new President. So I'm going to hand out now some workbooks, and go ahead, take one, and pass it. Oh, yeah, pass the pens around. Thanks. I forgot about that. I think I've got enough here for everybody if you're short by the time it gets around.

On the front, there's a box on the bottom that says please put your first name and first initial of your last name. Then turn to page two, and just hang there . . . and then once we're all caught up, I'll get moving and stuff. So go ahead and flip over to page two once you've filled it in. Okay. On page two it says please do not turn to the page until you're told. Okay. Go to page three.

So here's the question I want you to answer. If Donald Trump were an animal, what kind of animal would he be, and why? And then underneath, you don't have to fill out like lengthy reasons, but just jot down a couple of reasons why that particular animal came to mind. And when you're done, put your pencil down, but no rush. I just mentioned that. Take another moment or so to just finish your thoughts. And just kind of be finishing up. Okay. Man, I'm going to start with you. What did you have, and why?

MAN: I put hyena, because he doesn't get his information firsthand. He goes through sources, information's already gone through several times change like a hyena eating the leftovers of a lion.

MODERATOR: Okay. Woman, how about you, what did you have?



WOMAN: I just couldn't come up with an animal. I think sometimes he does things too fast without thinking. I also think that one of the worst things you can have in a business is someone who spends two years figuring out the perfect thing to do, because you get nothing done. So, I mean, I was just stuck there. I can't come up with an animal that fits that. I'm sorry. I mean, he doesn't seem to give a damn about what people think, which is also both good and bad, you know, so I don't know how to rate that, and I couldn't come up with an animal, in any case.

MODERATOR: Okay. Woman?

WOMAN: A donkey, which is also an ass, because of his mouth. I mean, he just, he puts his foot in his mouth constantly. His opinions, his comments are so offensive, and I just, I don't feel like he's, you know, he makes much sense.

MODERATOR: Okay. Woman?

WOMAN: I put a rat, because I think he's like disgusting, and he's something you don't want around, because he just, he truly doesn't belong around good people. I feel like he doesn't, because I don't feel like he's a good person.

MODERATOR: Okay. Man?

MAN: I said shark, calculating, opportunistic.

MODERATOR: Okay. Man?

MAN: A cougar, keen, mysterious, and I put paper face, but he can look nice in color, but, you know.

MODERATOR: Okay. Man?

MAN: I put cockroach. He's dirty, and I don't want him around.

MODERATOR: Okay. Woman?

WOMAN: I put a weasel, small-minded, selfish, sneaky, and generally not to be trusted around the henhouse.

MODERATOR: Okay. Man?

MAN: I put lion. I just put ferocious and antagonistic.

MODERATOR: Okay. Man?

MAN: I also put lion, you know, because he's the king of success. He's the leader. He's powerful, and he's aggressive, sometimes abrasive.

MODERATOR: Okay. The next thing that we're going to do in terms of an exercise, and we're going to have more discussion in a little bit, but this kind of gets, getting stuff down and thinking a bit is what's called, in survey, in, sorry, in focus group parlance, a mind map. And I'm going to show you a mind map, what I did was, when I got, that I did when I got here, and it takes two, three minutes.

And I started with a word in a circle, and you'll have one when you get to it. Yours won't be the same as mine. I started with spring, but I just want to show you this as an example. It's a little stuck here. So, spring, so the first thing I thought of grilling, you get to grill outside more. I live in Virginia, where it's not exactly winter there. It wasn't that bad a winter, but it's still, you know, rainy, cold, and stuff. And then also we can eat out on the patio more. And I do grill all year-round, but it's certainly more fun once the weather gets nicer.

And then we've got the flowers, and then my wife likes to plant flowers in the backyard. I get, you know, I get to help kind of do, help her with that. Baseball is back, and that's always a happy time. Birds, the feeders, that's part of my job is to make sure those are set up and all of that. And then, of course, the bird food attracts the squirrels, so then I've got to put Vaseline on the posts.

And it's kind of neat, because you don't put it right at the bottom. You want to let them get a little bit way, and then they hit the Vaseline and slide back down. So it's hours of entertainment. And, of course, eventually, the Vaseline wears off, either from the weather or whatever, and if I don't get back there, then the squirrels have a field day eating the bird feed. So then we've got longer days. Today doesn't count, but, you know, springtime is sunnier, and that's always nice. Then I've got a couple of daughters graduating from college in May, so this spring is certainly going to be very busy with that.

So go ahead and turn to page four. Now go to page five. And your mind map is Donald Trump. So take two, three minutes. Real quick, just jot down different feelings and thoughts that you have that come to mind about Donald Trump. Okay. Kind of be wrapping it up.

What I'm going to do is ask each of you, and, man, I'm going to start with you, so you kind of have it easiest, one thing that you wrote down. And I prefer it to be one thing that's different than whatever, you know, so, actually, man, you have it hardest, because you may, you

know, somebody may have said everything you said, but, in which case you just say it again.  
But, man, give me one thing you wrote down.

MAN: He's elitist.

MODERATOR: Elitist. And let's go to man.

MAN: Possible being a dictator.

MODERATOR: Okay. Woman?

WOMAN: Crass.

MODERATOR: Pardon?

WOMAN: Crass.

MODERATOR: Crass. Okay.

MAN: Fascist. I guess it's the same as dictator. Right?

MODERATOR: Yeah. Oh, it's, you know, it's not the same thing, but it's close,  
so we'll just kind of tie it to that one. Man?

MAN: Bankruptcy.

MODERATOR: Bankruptcy.

MAN: Self-absorbed.

WOMAN: Liar.

WOMAN: Powerful.

MODERATOR: And woman?

WOMAN: Soap for his mouth.

MODERATOR: Soap . . . as well.

MAN: Unprofessional.

MODERATOR: Unprofessional.

MAN: Also, and I said elitist. I think elite is more than . . .

MODERATOR: Oh, elite. I'm sorry.

MAN: Yeah. No, I said elitist initially . . . elite.

MODERATOR: All right. The next thing I want, and this will be the last one for  
a while, but if you could turn two pages ahead, there's two very short questions to answer. And  
one is the thing that President Trump has done so far that I like most is? And then the thing that  
he has done so far that concerns me most is? So just jot those down briefly. When you're done,

stay on the page, but please put your pencil down. Man, I'm going to start with you. We'll move to the other end now. What did you have for like, and what did you have for concern?

MAN: He helped the stock market rise briefly.

MODERATOR: Okay. Concern?

MAN: Who he has appointed.

MODERATOR: When you say that, are you thinking, well, are you thinking of his staff or his cabinet, Supreme Court, what appointments? Is there any one or two in particular?

MAN: Yeah. Who regulates the laws or enforces the laws.

MODERATOR: The Attorney General.

MAN: Yes, that.

MODERATOR: Anybody remember the Attorney General's name?

MAN: No.

MAN: Sessions.

MODERATOR: Sessions. That's it. I knew I'd heard of it. Okay. Let's go to man. Like most, and concern?

MAN: He's attempting to prop up and make the economy better.

MODERATOR: And concern?

MAN: That he's quick to not necessarily do very well reacting to foreign situations and foreign leaders.

MODERATOR: Okay. And do you go by woman or woman?

WOMAN: Woman. Yeah.

MODERATOR: Woman. Okay. I wasn't even close . . .

WOMAN: Well, I can't really think of anything that I like about him. And the thing that I really, that really concerns me the most is that he just says whatever, and he doesn't even know what he's talking about half the time. And then he says he didn't say it, he meant something else.

MODERATOR: Okay. And then we have woman. Sorry. I'm . . .

WOMAN: I don't know if it's still referred to as Obamacare, but the fact that he's not going to touch the requirement of age and the pre-existing conditions.

MODERATOR: I think the age is 26 . . .

WOMAN: Twenty-six. Right. And what concerns me most is his choice of Secretary of Education, and I cannot remember her name.

MAN: Betsy DeVos.

WOMAN: Betsy DeVos.

MODERATOR: Woman?

WOMAN: The thing that I'm most appreciative is the focus on simplifying the taxes code and reducing regulations in general. There are some areas I would rather not see touched, but, overall, I think we've got far too much law at federal level that could go down to the state more.

And the things that I'm most concerned about, the bombing concerned me, and, on the other hand, I get that you don't, what's the word he used, you don't telegraph your punches, it was some boxing term. I get that. So many times we agonize over big decisions and let everybody know what we're thinking before we start. That's not . . . of any time at war. We need to do it or don't do it.

MODERATOR: When you're talking about the bombing, are you talking about Syria?

WOMAN: I was talking about the big bomb they dropped on the town . . .

MODERATOR: Oh, in Afghanistan. Okay. That was the most?

[Simultaneous discussion]

MODERATOR: Mother of all bombs. Okay. Man?

MAN: For me, what I'm most appreciative of is his intents to bring back manufacturing jobs back in the states.

MAN: All 18 coal jobs.

MAN: His intents to.

WOMAN: Yeah. Intents . . .

MAN: But . . . he won't get . . . that . . .

MODERATOR: And concerns?

MAN: Similar to her, the bombing, but it was more that he made several bombings within a close time of each other without having to go through Congress. Doing it once is, you know, enough, but it makes several times . . . concerns me about your future actions.

MODERATOR: Okay. Man?

MAN: I'd say that I like that he's taking a more active role in foreign policy and that he's quickly approved airstrikes. And I dislike that he's filled his cabinet with, you know, uber- and ultra-conservative people . . . Republicans have, you definitely expect him to appoint conservative, but I think he's kind of taken it a step too far with these people that just . . .

MODERATOR: Okay. Man?

MAN: I didn't have anything that felt like I liked about him, but as far as the concerns, I had furthering tensions in the world, specifically, the Middle East, that could have ramifications down the line, remembering the 1993 and 2001 World Trade Center attacks.

MODERATOR: Okay. Woman?

WOMAN: What I like most so far is the promises of deregulation. I'm hoping that happens. What concerns me the most, the first thing I thought of was him refusing to shake Angela Merkel's hand and the travel ban. So I would say international relations. Maybe that would cover all of that.

MODERATOR: Okay. And you made a . . . but . . . man?

MAN: The thing that he has done most that I like is he's been pretty good for comedy. *SNL* has been better lately.

MAN: John Oliver has been killing it.

MAN: John Oliver has been good. And then the travel ban is my most concerning.

MODERATOR: All right. Well, go ahead and put the workbooks aside now. We are not going to come back to those for a while. But I like to call them fun books. I'm going to read you the two questions I'm going to ask next, and so that you know that the two that are coming. You can think about them for a moment.

And that is if you could pick one personal quality, which personal quality do you like most about Donald Trump? I'm sorry . . . and which personal quality that Donald Trump has concerns you most about him? I'm not talking about issues. I'm talking about personal qualities. So what ones, you know, if you could pick one personal quality that you like about him, what would you say?

MAN: He's ambitious.

MODERATOR: Ambitious. Okay.

MAN: I'd probably say ambitious too.

MAN: He appears to be very family-oriented.

MODERATOR: Okay. What else, other personal qualities that are admirable in him?

MAN: I guess, in addition to ambitious, he perseveres. And if you have a goal in life, and, obviously, in this case, his goal is to become President, if you give up, you're never going to win. But if you keep trying, it doesn't guarantee that you're going to win at something in life. But, certainly, if you give up, you're never going to win, so his perseverance.

MODERATOR: Okay. Anything else?

MAN: Persuasive.

MODERATOR: Persuasive. Okay.

WOMAN: I would say his ability to change direction. I know that sounds perverse, but it's like in the first round on the healthcare didn't go through, he says we'll work on taxes for a while instead of beating his head against the healthcare situation.

MODERATOR: Okay. Any other personal qualities that are positive? Okay. How about the ones that concern you the most?

MAN: He's conceited.

MAN: Unethical.

MODERATOR: Unethical. Okay.

MAN: Unprofessional.

MODERATOR: Un?

MAN: Unprofessional . . .

MODERATOR: In what ways is he unprofessional?

MAN: Just he's, the name-calling in the election, his, he's way too present on Twitter. He used the Official President of the United States account to comment on his daughter's line being dismissed from whatever fashion line that was, that, was that Nordstrom?

WOMAN: I think it was Nordstrom's that they took it out.

MAN: Yeah. That is not something you should be commenting on as the President of the United States. He shouldn't even be commenting on . . . position, but at least do it through your own personal account, not the President of the United States' Twitter account.

MODERATOR: Okay. What other personal qualities does he have?

MAN: He's very thin skinned.

WOMAN: Lack of respect for his wife or women. He seemed to be for . . . his presence.

WOMAN: Disrespectful comes to mind. I watched a lot of *Celebrity* and regular *Apprentice* years ago, and I just remember feeling like, wow, that guy really doesn't know how to talk to people. Nobody likes him right now, and they should. He's the boss, you know. I don't feel like he's someone you would look up to or want to be like. But, on the other hand, a positive attribute, he's fierce. I mean, he's very successful. He's obviously good at what he does, and he did manage to get into the presidential seat, so.

MODERATOR: Okay. Any other personal qualities concern you about him?

WOMAN: His mouth. He just can't control it.

MODERATOR: Okay. This focus group is one of a series of groups that are being overseen by a professor who is studying the election, the 2016 election and Trump Presidency. I'm not a professor. My job is exactly what you're seeing tonight, which is a focus group moderator. Oftentimes, we don't indicate who is doing the research, who is sponsoring the research so that it doesn't bias people, but I wanted to tell you that. I thought it made sense to tell you that, because it'll explain some of the questions that I'm going to ask next.

And, for tonight, you know, or, overall, we're doing them with different types of voters, some people who supported Trump, some people who were Republican and voted for Clinton, some people who, you know, did other things, they were Obama supporters, and how they broke down. But, tonight, everyone here is, when the folks called, they said they either did not vote in the election, or they voted for a third-party candidate for President instead of Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton.

So I'm giving you that information so these next questions make sense. And I'm going to, some of the questions I'm going to split out and just ask the third-party voters, others just to the nonvoters, because it wouldn't make sense. So if you're a nonvoter, and I don't know who's who, I'll figure it out as soon as . . . but, you know, if you're a nonvoter, don't answer the third-party questions, the third-party voter question. And if you're a third-party voter, please don't answer the nonvoter question.

So the first one is for the third-party voters. When did you decide, and, obviously, you'll be giving yourself away, and I don't think it matters, you already told the people



there, when did you decide that you were not going to vote for either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton, and what caused that decision? So if you voted third party, what caused you?

WOMAN: When?

MODERATOR: Yeah. When and what caused that decision?

MAN: For me, it was pretty early on, probably the first debates or the first times that both of them started to go back and forth.

MODERATOR: So when you, I'm sorry, just to clarify, man, you're not talking about then the presidential primary debates, you're talking about the general election.

MAN: No, no. After the general election. Yeah. It, you know, there wasn't any talk of, politicians throw out stuff, but they don't substantiate how they're going to go about doing things. They don't say what they're going to do. They're going to say what somebody else is not going to do, or they hammer at their either past stuff, you know, with the Clintons, the foundation, all that stuff. And with Trump, it's his mouth. You know, he just, they just went back and forth, and, you know, I got to a point where I just couldn't see voting for either one of them.

I couldn't see a big change if Hillary was elected, and I saw Trump being this arrogant ass that he is, a complete polar opposite as far as business and foreign policy and everything else, and I just couldn't see voting for either one of them. I didn't have a good choice for a third party, because it wasn't, you know, there was the Green Party, and there was the Libertarians and everything. But it was more of a protest vote for me. I'm just saying I wouldn't vote for either one of you. I don't think either one of you are going to do a good job.

MODERATOR: Who else voted third party?

WOMAN: I did.

MODERATOR: Okay. Woman?

WOMAN: I knew I wasn't going to vote for Hillary Clinton very early on. I waited until after the primaries to make my decision about whether I would vote Republican or not, and depending on, I would have to say I probably made a decision after their debate, so definitely after the primaries. I hadn't decided until then.

You know, like I'd only seen him on *The Apprentice*, so I didn't really know like what kind of a person he really was, because some of that is just edited. You know, who knows? Their debates, and I saw how disrespectful and arrogant he was toward her. And I don't even

like her. And I was like, hey, back up, dude. And just the way that he was, I thought if he's like that in the debates, he's going to be way worse as a President.

And then somebody posted on my Facebook group about a third-party candidate, and so I started watching their videos, and I had liked that party anyway. So I would have to say maybe it was pretty close to the election when I decided. It was after their debates, which I don't remember when those were.

MODERATOR: Okay. Who else voted third party? Woman?

WOMAN: I was leaning towards Hillary probably for the most part, and then I started teetering back and forth, because I would hear so much negative about her. And then, you know, when I saw videos of late-term abortions, and that did it for me with her. And with him, you know, with the videos that came out, what he said about women, I mean, it was just so, it was like a back and forth Ping-Pong, and then I couldn't stand either one of them. So it, I mean, it was a few weeks before the election.

MODERATOR: All right. Woman?

WOMAN: You know, really, the media did this. The media absolutely did it, because . . .

MODERATOR: Oh, I'm sorry. Did what, caused you to vote third party, or?

WOMAN: This particular, well, yes, and this election. I mean, all of us are complaining about our offerings, and I personally think if none of the above had been on the ballot, he would have won by a landslide. But we're so busy making each side look like a villain that there are no good options that any of us see. And it used to be that if a President had fallibility, you never saw it. You didn't even see FDR in his wheelchair, usually. The shots were taken chest shots. You didn't see them see them smoking, usually, and you didn't, any of the stuff that we find out in later years that the Presidents did.

MODERATOR: But what caused you, at what point did you say I'm not voting for the two major parties?

WOMAN: I knew I wasn't going with Hillary, probably before the Benghazi thing came out, but I knew I wasn't voting for her. And when Trump started looking like he might get the nomination, I said, I'm going to change my party if he gets nominated. I didn't do that, but I didn't vote for him either. And it's just no good options there. No good options.

MAN: But if you had known what we know now about John Kennedy, would you have voted for him?

MODERATOR: Oh, I'm sorry, man. I don't need any. That's a, you know, we're not, we're putting 1960 . . .

MAN: Oh, I was, but she's talking about the head shots with the cripple and . . .

WOMAN: Yeah, well, that's true.

MODERATOR: Well, let me ask this. Anybody else vote third-party candidate? Okay. Man, what caused, when did you decide you weren't voting for the two major-party candidates?

MAN: After the primaries were elected. I just didn't see good leadership qualities in either of those two, and I think it's moral reasons were my main decisions.

MODERATOR: Okay. Of those of you who did not vote in the election, do you typically vote in presidential elections, or is it unusual for you to vote?

MAN: . . .

MODERATOR: Pardon?

MAN: I do normally vote.

WOMAN: I do too.

MODERATOR: Man?

MAN: No. I don't vote.

MODERATOR: You don't? Okay. And what . . .

MAN: I've only been around for two elections, so I haven't voted . . .

MODERATOR: Okay. And who, am I missing anybody? Oh, yeah. Man?

MAN: Well, 30 years ago, I guess, when I turned 18, I was a Libertarian, and for many years, I guess I thought I could change the world. But I've realized that the rest of America, you know, is not on the same page as I was, so I've just stopped voting.

MODERATOR: Now those of you who did not vote, did you not vote because you didn't like the choices of the two main candidates, obviously, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, or because, eh, you know, elections just aren't that important? Woman, I saw you . . .

WOMAN: I did not like the choices. I didn't really know much about him. I just remember one day, this lady at work, she kept coming and telling me about him every day. And then I saw him speaking when, back when he was with the Cruz and throwing water, and making

fun of him. I was like this cannot be the leader of our country, someone that acts so immature and unprofessional. And then, you know, Hillary, I just never really liked her a lot. So I just thought there's, I don't know what to do. I just don't know what to do. So everyone kept talking to me about it, so I'm just not going to vote. I can't decide.

MODERATOR: Okay. Others who didn't vote, did you decide not to vote because of the two major candidates, or did you decide, oh, you know, it's not going to make much of a difference?

MAN: Kind of. I mean, I wasn't going to vote for Hillary, because she's just so incredibly dishonest. And Trump, you know, just says a lot of the most ridiculous things sometimes. But then also the fact that, you know, the Libertarian, you know, their platform, I guess I kind of like use the Libertarian Party, they're socially liberal, but, fiscally, when it comes to foreign policy, pretty conservative. But their platform and their agenda is just so absurd as well that, yeah, there really weren't any, I guess, candidates that aligned with my personal views.

MODERATOR: Man, how about you, what was your thought on?

MAN: I just . . . didn't appealed to me, and I don't vote just because of there's no good options. This is the lesser . . . however many evils, so if I don't generally like a candidate, I'm not going to vote for them just because people say I should vote. Also, if you vote for like other candidates, you can influence the election in other ways. Right?

If you don't vote for somebody, it does help out. Also, living in Texas, odds are it's going to end up being Republican, so even if I did vote for Hillary, the Electoral College . . . I wouldn't vote for Hillary, but with the way that it's set up, the popular vote doesn't really matter. It's the Electoral College vote, so me voting for any other party besides Republican is not going to make a difference.

MODERATOR: Okay. And, man, you didn't vote because you typically don't. Why do you typically, you're a nonvoter?

MAN: Well, I think . . .

MODERATOR: Because, I mean, I don't know. I mean, you're giving me the sense that you're not a Donald Trump fan.

MAN: No.

MODERATOR: I hope I'm not putting words in your mouth. So why did you not go vote against him?

MAN: I mean, I think all politicians, if you make it to the level where you're running for any sort of state office, you're generally, probably going to be a pretty bad person. You know, so you've got Hillary Clinton who's a rat. You've got Trump, who's a bigger rat.

MODERATOR: You said cockroach, I think.

MAN: Yeah. And you've got Gary Johnson who's a smaller rat with way less education than both of these guys. And then you've got Jill Stein who takes all her money from her parents, so you have options who are just pointless. I mean, federal elections don't really affect anything, and the Electoral College kind of runs the entire show anyway, so mainstream politics are kind of pointless.

MODERATOR: Okay. Going into Election Day, who did you think was going to win the election, Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton? And just a quick show of hands, how many thought Hillary was going to win? Okay. How many thought Trump was going to win? Three. Four. I'm sorry. And then, man?

MAN: I didn't have an opinion on who was going to win.

MODERATOR: For those of you who thought Hillary was going to win, why did you think she was going to win?

MAN: Just I thought it was more widespread and . . . toward Trump than Hillary. And she did win the popular vote, so . . .

MODERATOR: Yeah. So I guess in a way she won . . . the Electoral College.

MAN: So more people did vote for her, so but just not the right amounts in certain states.

MODERATOR: Okay. Others who picked Hillary, why did you think she was going to win?

WOMAN: Because I thought by then Donald Trump would . . . himself. I just didn't see any way he could, I didn't see any way that he could win. I was shocked. I was really shocked. My kids were shocked. My daughter didn't go to work that day. Everybody was so upset.

MODERATOR: And then those of you who thought Trump was going to win, why did you think Trump was going to win?

MAN: Because, you know, even though the media focused on the fact that Hillary was going to win, everybody that I talked to said that they supported Trump. It was just,

you know, you'd see Trump rallies, and there'd be so many people just so excited. And you'd look at Hillary's rallies, and, you know, there wouldn't be that many people there, and people weren't that excited. So it just kind of felt like, you know, Trump had everything going for him.

MODERATOR: Okay. Woman, you were about to say?

WOMAN: Yeah. I was going to say my, the pulse in my world, a lot of people that I knew in important states for the Electoral College were excited about Trump. They were like posting on Facebook all the time. You know, I unfollowed a whole bunch of people. It got really crazy. But they were really excited about him.

And the people that I knew who were voting for Hillary were only voting for her because they didn't want Trump to win. They were Bernie supporters originally. And I heard from a lot of my Bernie friends, supporting friends, who were like, oh, we're just going to sit it out, because we hate her, and we hate him, so that's, and so I had a feeling that he was going to win just because I think of that level of excitement that got people really into it.

MODERATOR: That, actually, woman brings up a good point. Of those of you who did not vote in the election, would you have voted had Bernie Sanders been the Democrat's nominee? Woman's saying yes. Woman's is saying yes. Okay. Anybody else? No. Okay. A couple of people though. Do you have any friends or neighbors or family members, and woman touched on this, who supported Donald, who voted for Donald Trump?

WOMAN: Yes.

MODERATOR: Okay. And what?

WOMAN: My sister, yes.

MODERATOR: And how was Thanksgiving?

WOMAN: I had my . . . my son is in San Diego. He is like how can Aunt Woman, how can she even talk to us? Because my kids are half Spanish, so it's like how can she even talk to us? How can she stand here? But she did, then so.

MODERATOR: So what are, for anybody who had friends, neighbors, family who voted for Trump, what were the reasons when you talked to them that they gave you that they were voting for Trump, woman?

WOMAN: My daughter, who is married to a Hispanic man . . . both like to watch *The Apprentice*. And I had never watched it, but they thought that he was very decisive and had good reasoning behind his decisions. They didn't say he was a nice guy, but they really were

excited about him. And my whole family . . . friends of mine who are family and largely, simply on the basis of the right to life versus pro-choice.

MODERATOR: Okay. Other reasons people friends, family, neighbors voted for Trump?

MAN: Oh, my father, you know, he voted for him because he was successful in business. And also, my father is from Argentina, and he really doesn't like the fact that Democrats are trying to make a lot of illegal, or give a lot of illegal aliens citizenship, because he says that, you know, he came in through the front door, and all these people who came here illegally, you know, they committed a crime, and they didn't have to do anything that he had to. You know, they should be kicked out and be rewarded for breaking the law.

MODERATOR: Okay. Man and then woman?

MAN: He wasn't a politician. That was the main thing.

MODERATOR: Woman?

WOMAN: And my sister, she said because he was a businessman that he was going to turn the country around. She, because she's the manager of the airport, so she's, you know.

WOMAN: Yeah. I got that a lot. He's a billion, he's a gazillionaire. He's going to do something great for the economy. He's not a politician, so he's not going to be bought off, because he already has all the money. And that was what they were really excited about, like he can't be purchased.

MODERATOR: Man, how about you, friends, family, neighbors who voted for Trump, what did they say? Why did they tell you they were voting for Trump?

MAN: My dad voted for him just because he's voted Republican for however many years he's been voting. That's pretty much the only person that I knew voted for Trump.

MODERATOR: Okay. Anybody else have any other reasons that haven't been mentioned yet?

MAN: They were very opposed to Hillary.

MODERATOR: Okay. And then anybody here, did you ever consider voting for Donald Trump during the campaign? We have one yes.

WOMAN: Yes.

MODERATOR: Okay. Man, I'm curious. Why did you consider?

MAN: I wanted to see how bad things could get before the world just fell apart. That's my real reason.

MODERATOR: Plus the comedy. Don't forget. Woman?

WOMAN: Why did I consider it initially?

MODERATOR: Yeah.

WOMAN: Probably for the same reasons, that he's not a politician, and he couldn't be purchased. And I did see him on *The Apprentice*, and he was a strong personality, so I felt like he wasn't going to get pushed around, and.

MODERATOR: Anybody here consider voting for Hillary Clinton?

WOMAN: I did at first. I mean, but, you know, both of them, I did.

MODERATOR: Why? What was it? Oh, okay. But about her, what was it about her that you said, yeah, maybe I ought to vote for her?

WOMAN: Equal rights, first and foremost.

MODERATOR: Man?

MAN: Too just briefly, but just because you always want to debate whether you vote for the best, or the candidate that you think is the best or the one that you really vote against the one that you really don't want.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thinking back to election night or the next morning, because not everybody stayed up, yeah, because our, I know, I remember it was pretty late. I don't remember the exact time. But what emotions did you feel on election night or the next morning when you learned that Trump had won the presidency?

WOMAN: Disgust.

MODERATOR: Disgust.

MAN: Yeah. The good guys lost.

MAN: I was kind of excited, you know, not so much that because Trump won, but just because the media had been so wrong . . . you know, that was exciting to realize that things like that could happen still.

MODERATOR: Man, why was the media so wrong?

MAN: Well, you know, I mean, they just tend to be so incredibly . . . you know, and I think that they did not like what they saw about Trump. You know, he was kind of leading the polls and definitely had a good campaign, but they were kind of afraid.



MODERATOR: Man, how about you, how did you feel, what was your emotion or emotions when you found out Trump had won?

MAN: Well, like I said, I was concerned and still am concerned that he could be the next Mussolini or Hitler. I mean, Hillary Clinton, she's a thief. She was out to steal everything but the kitchen sink, but I don't think she was dangerous. This guy, he has the potentiality of offing whatever party or party . . . left.

MODERATOR: So let me ask you this. If you were like, okay, this guy could be the next Mussolini, it's normally not a compliment.

MAN: It wasn't meant to be.

MODERATOR: Yeah. I didn't think it was.

MAN: . . . Mussolini, so . . .

MODERATOR: Why didn't you vote for her?

MAN: As I've mentioned numerous times during this group, I don't believe in Democrats or Republicans, because they both believe in big government and big spending. We need to get back to what this country was started, you know, at the onset.

MODERATOR: Okay. Other emotions people felt on election night?

MAN: Amused.

MODERATOR: Amused? Okay.

MAN: It was just funny how people were fighting over. They made it, it was a big deal, but they made it violent. And then, also, *South Park* made one of their characters into Trump, and then he became President, which was very funny, so.

MAN: I was kind of amused too, because, you know, Hillary Clinton is also extremely arrogant. Just to see her, you know, come out on stage and have to give a concession speech was, I thought it was pretty fun to watch.

MODERATOR: Okay. Down at this end, what emotions did you feel?

WOMAN: I felt sick when I woke up, because I did go to sleep thinking, oh, well, she's going to win. He's not going to win. Then I woke up, and my son had texted me. He's like, oh, my God. What are we going to do? Then my daughter, she's a teacher, so she was very upset. And I just, and I still, I mean, I don't worry about it as much right now, but I still am worried. I feel like we are definitely going a different way than we've ever gone in our, you know, in the existence of America, so.

WOMAN: Well, you know, I was like probably, is meh an emotion? Because I remember walking into work and looking and going, you know, oh, yeah. Okay. Honestly, because, I mean, the democracy in our country, our way of life is so strong, one guy in there for four years is not going to taint it, so I'm not that worried about it. I think he's going to probably end up getting impeached or just embarrassed. And, you know, our country is such a giant cruise ship, you can't turn it on a dime. It takes a really long time to get anything done. So I wasn't worried immediately. I was glad that Hillary wasn't President, and I was just kind of like, meh, all right.

MODERATOR: Okay. So you didn't vote. Either you didn't vote, or you voted for a third-party candidate. Did Trump's victory make you wish that you had voted for Hillary, anybody?

WOMAN: No.

MAN: Not yet.

MAN: We'll see.

MODERATOR: All right. How many of you voted for Barack Obama in 2012, just a show of hands, anybody? Okay. We have one person. Woman, I'm not picking on you, but what are some of the reasons you did not vote for Obama's endorsed candidate? I guess you kind of talked about that a little bit, but anything else come to mind?

WOMAN: Say that again?

MODERATOR: Obama, President Obama endorsed Hillary Clinton. Not a surprise, given that she was his Secretary of State and same party. What are some of the reasons you did not vote for his, you know, you voted for him in 2012, but you didn't turn and vote for his endorsed candidate?

WOMAN: I mean, she's a liar. Not living up to, you know, some things that she promised, a lot of things that I was hearing in the media that were scary. You know, I didn't know what to believe, you know, so it became fear-based for me. And I took, I really didn't give her a huge chance, because I was listening, my mother is Catholic, so I'm hearing all of the negative, totally, you know, about Hillary, and so that persuaded me a lot, heavily.

But I watched this interview with her with the, and I can't think of, it was an African-American woman, and I got to see her in this interview on a personal level, you know, as a mother, as a grandmother. And I connected with that for the first time, you know, during that

campaign, and I was more in awe of her during this interview. And so, at that point, I was leaning towards her.

But then after the next few weeks, other things that were coming out, you know, it was just, it was difficult. Even what my mother was saying against her and the hate, I was still trying to, you know, find the positive, because equal rights is very important to me, so.

MODERATOR: Okay. Let me ask the group this. Thinking about President Obama and thinking about President Trump, in what ways are they similar?

MAN: I think they're both successful.

WOMAN: Tall.

MODERATOR: Successful, tall. In what ways are they different?

WOMAN: Demeanor.

MODERATOR: Woman, what do you mean by demeanor?

WOMAN: President Obama, even if you don't like him, and I didn't vote for him, he is very presidential, and he is, he can be strong, but his demeanor is more respectful and on a more quiet scale. He's powerful, but he is not brash about it. And it feels like Donald Trump just fills the room and sucks all the attention, and he's very loud, and he doesn't think before he speaks.

And you can see Obama hesitating as he's speaking off the cuff. We all made fun of him for that his first few years. Like he can't, he doesn't have all of the, he wasn't as free with his words as Trump seems to be. Like Trump just seems to have like a stream of consciousness when he does an interview, and Obama seemed reserved and really thought about what he wanted to say.

MODERATOR: Other ways that they are different, Obama and Trump?

WOMAN: I think Obama is pretty intelligent, and I don't think that Trump is very intelligent.

MAN: And he does have Ivy League degrees.

WOMAN: Yeah. IQ-wise, Trump probably paid for his.

WOMAN: . . .

WOMAN: I disagree. I think they're both smart, but Obama is much more polished.

WOMAN: He's very, yeah, he's got a lot of class.

WOMAN: Trump is just kind of this antithesis in a lot of ways, because he is certainly rough cut. He's a bull in a china shop.

MODERATOR: Okay. Do you think that, whether you like the changes or not, do you think that Donald Trump is either changing Washington or will be able to change Washington?

MAN: Absolutely.

MODERATOR: Man, tell us a little more.

MAN: Yeah. I think that everybody was, not only the media but the politicians were so shocked that he won that somebody who, you know, was not a politician and didn't have the backing of a major party right from the get-go, that he actually was successful and then became President, and I think it was kind of a rude awakening to them that the people don't, you know, appreciate either platform.

MODERATOR: Man, how about you? I saw you kind of shaking your head no.

MAN: I don't think the President, regardless of who it is, is going to change that political atmosphere. The machine, and it is a machine, you know, it's very powerful, back to the Obama and Hillary thing. Obama never really stepped up to support her until later. And I'm sure there was a tremendous amount of pressure put on him from the Democratic Party, so to get, make any major changes in that system and in one individual, I don't think, is going to change that system.

MODERATOR: Okay. Any other thoughts on Trump being able to change or is changing the way Washington works?

WOMAN: I'm hopeful. I'm not banking on it, but I'm hopeful.

MODERATOR: Okay. Why are you hopeful?

WOMAN: Because just because of all the things that are wrong about his personality. You really, he, first of all, he brings more discussion up to the surface, more arguments. It's not the word I want. It just all sort of comes up. I'm not expressing myself well, but he is not concerned about playing the political games that are played on The Hill, and he doesn't have to be. He's been more on the other side and the one pulling those strings. Now he's on the inside. Maybe he'll get something done or break some noses. It would be good. We need a shakeup there.

MODERATOR: Okay. What was the campaign, the Trump campaign's slogan?

MAN: Make America Great Again.

MODERATOR: I assume before tonight everybody had heard that or pretty much?

[Simultaneous discussion]

MAN: I thought they got it from Reagan. I saw a documentary about that.

MODERATOR: He, Reagan in '84 used It's Morning Again in America . . . come back after the '70s. In '80, I don't remember. I studied this, so it, that stuff interests me. I don't remember what it was in '80, but I think it was like, I don't even know, it might have been close to that though. It might have been a genesis of it. Anyhow, when you hear Make America Great Again, what does that mean to you?

WOMAN: It sounds so pompous. That's what it sounds like.

MAN: It sounds like, you know, he's lost faith in America as if America is not great. And it kind of really irritates me when people say that, because there's nothing, you know, we may not have a perfect country, but we're definitely far better than anyone else. We haven't really gone downhill at all. I think it's just improved, you know, since it was founded, so it irritates me when people say that. Also, the fact that they think that, you know, they have the ability to have a country that is bad into a like huge success is irritating as well.

MODERATOR: Man, how about you, what did you hear when you hear Make America Great Again?

MAN: Politics, catchy, will get a lot of votes.

MODERATOR: Okay. Man, how about you when you hear Make America Great Again?

MAN: I think the, it's a perceptive thing, a perception thing that we've kind of lost our role in the world as being, you know, what you all, what every country would strive to be like, democracy, business, commerce, equality, that kind of thing. I think that what they were trying to show, or the perception was that we weren't there anymore as far as a country in the world, our stature, the perception of other countries of the United States had gotten to a point where they said, you know, we're going to make that better.

MODERATOR: Woman, you have a particularly expressive look on your face, so I'm going to go to you.

WOMAN: I think that we are a great country, and I think pretty much everyone thought that we were, pretty much, and now they're kind of worried.

MODERATOR: Okay. Is there, in any of your minds, is there a racist element to the slogan Make America Great Again?

MAN: I don't think so.

WOMAN: I wouldn't go that far.

MODERATOR: Man, you're nodding your head yes.

MAN: I mean, I'm curious what time period America he's referring to. I mean, you have a nation built on slavery that continued policies of racism up until the '70s. And then after the '70s, you had the bolstering in the prison industrial complex, sticking a bunch of those people who were segregated into prisons now to become the workforce. So I'm not really sure when America was great. I mean, it had a lot of money, but that doesn't mean it's a, just like billionaires, they have a lot of money, that doesn't mean they're good people.

MODERATOR: Okay. Do you think that Donald Trump won the election more on his issue positions or more on his willingness to take, I'm sorry, to tell it like it is instead of worrying about being politically correct?

MAN: The latter. Yeah. It made him seem very charismatic.

MAN: And no other candidate really came out with their agenda really in the campaign, or, yeah, the race.

MODERATOR: Okay. Any other thoughts on that?

WOMAN: Yeah. Because it felt like Hillary was just saying I'm just going to keep doing what I've always been doing. So I don't think he really had to answer that, because all he had to say was I'm going to do the opposite of what he's been doing. But it felt more like it was, you know, that phrase that you just said, the last part.

MAN: What was the question? I'm sorry.

MODERATOR: Did he win the election more based on his issue positions or more based on his willingness to tell it like it is instead of worrying about being more politically correct? Now you might not agree with how he tells it like it is, but which one do you think played more of a role?

MAN: I don't know. I can't give a proper answer for that.

WOMAN: Yeah. The phrase tell it like it is hit my Facebook page a lot from my family, so that was definitely a big draw for them.

MODERATOR: More than the issues?

WOMAN: Yeah. I didn't really see a lot about specific things that they wanted him to do.

MAN: He just came up with a lot of phrases that are good for chanting, and I feel like that gets people really into it.

MODERATOR: Those of you who are, who voted third party this time, and you remember who you are, I don't, but this one is directed at you. And that is, did you vote just for President, or did you vote for Congress, and I don't know if you had any other offices up here in Texas, I don't remember, did you have governor up? No.

[Simultaneous discussion]

MODERATOR: . . . so, anyhow, did you vote for Congress and maybe other offices, or just for President when you voted?

WOMAN: For Congress as well.

MAN: Yeah. I voted for everything that as on the ballot.

MODERATOR: Did you vote Republican, Democratic, third party, or a mix for those other offices?

MAN: A mix.

WOMAN: A mix.

WOMAN: Mix.

WOMAN: I want to say I had, I think we had, I had to do a mix. There were a few that didn't have the third-party option, anybody running for that, in the smaller elections.

MAN: I mean, I don't think anybody that voted third party actually thought that the Libertarian candidate would be elected.

WOMAN: Yeah. We didn't.

MAN: I don't know of anybody who would have thought that, because you don't have . . . the huge amounts of money, the political execution of a presidential election. There's no way that anybody could have thought that the Libertarian candidate could have won.

MODERATOR: And he, then he wasn't in the debates, was he?

WOMAN: No. They wouldn't let him in.

MAN: No, they didn't. Yeah. They . . . nobody . . .

[Simultaneous Discussion]

WOMAN: You had a hard time getting any information on him. You had to really dig.

MAN: Yeah. So like I said earlier, for me, it was just the fact that I wanted a vote to show up that said I didn't want to vote for either one of these two.

MODERATOR: Thinking about Congress, did you vote Republican, Democratic, or third party?

WOMAN: Third party where it was available.

MODERATOR: Okay. Anybody else remember?

WOMAN: . . .

MAN: I did a mixture. I'm no Libertarian . . .

MODERATOR: No. I mean U.S. Congress. I mean, hopefully, you only voted once for that, because that's kind of what the law is. So when you voted for Congress, do you remember who, which party you voted for? I don't know. I don't care who it is.

WOMAN: Republican.

MAN: Republican.

MODERATOR: Let's think about the Democratic Party for a second, not the chair of the national party, they've just elected a new one. But, in your mind, who is the leading Democrat in the country these days? Think about it this way. Barack Obama is former President. Put him aside. Hillary Clinton lost. Put her aside. So who's the leading, when you think of the Democratic Party, the future of the Democratic Party here in the country or the leader, who do you think of?

MAN: I'd say they're leaderless.

MODERATOR: Leaderless. Okay.

WOMAN: Like who do we think they're going to put up for President?

MODERATOR: Yeah. Or who do you think the leader is right now?

MAN: . . . need a spokesperson . . .

MODERATOR: Okay. Let me throw out some names, and see if you recognize them. Elizabeth Warren, ever heard of her?

WOMAN: Yes.



MAN: Yes.

MODERATOR: Okay. Is she one of the leaders?

MAN: No.

WOMAN: No.

MODERATOR: Bernie Sanders?

WOMAN: No.

MAN: But he's the most talked about Democrat.

MAN: I mean, he probably could fill the spot, but he's not, I wouldn't say he does.

MODERATOR: Okay. Chuck Schumer?

MAN: No. Definitely not.

WOMAN: No.

MODERATOR: People know who he is though?

MAN: Yeah.

MODERATOR: Nancy Pelosi?

MAN: Is she still around?

[Simultaneous discussion]

MODERATOR: All right. A show of hands. Who here uses Twitter? Raise your hand if you use Twitter. One, two.

[Simultaneous discussion]

MODERATOR: Do either of you follow Donald Trump on his . . .

MAN: Yeah. Hilarious.

MODERATOR: This is open for anybody, and that is why do you think he tweets so much?

MAN: He's hired someone to do it.

MAN: No, I . . .

MODERATOR: He, wait. I'm sorry. Man, what did you say? Tell me . . .

MAN: Well, it's his, it's back to the thin skin and the criticism. It's really easy to fire right back. His ego can't take the fact that, you know, it doesn't have to be on Twitter, wherever, any criticism, he's immediately firing back. So his ego won't let that go. He's got to

retort, you know, he's got to have a comment for everything that comes around, so I think it's, I think he's back to being an egomaniac.

MODERATOR: Okay. Other thoughts on why he tweets so much?

MAN: Also, Obama, you know, he was successful because he used social marketing. And I think that, you know, the Republican Party kind of embraced that, you know, the first election following . . . when Obama left. But, so I think that was a big part of it. And I don't know, he gets so much media coverage based on his tweets that . . .

MAN: He was a . . . he was very active on Twitter well before the election.

MAN: I think the sway of perception so people aren't just guessing, so he kind of steers them with certain ones a lot better than people give him credit for.

MAN: Yeah. He has so many followers on Twitter, you know, like it's just easy to keep in touch.

MODERATOR: Do you think that his tweets help him or hurt him?

MAN: Hurt him.

WOMAN: Hurt him.

MAN: Help him.

MODERATOR: A couple of helps and others hurts.

MAN: There are, I've seen some, because they go back through his tweets, and they've found some of his tweets that contradict his actions.

MAN: All politicians do that.

MAN: Yeah. But he's, like this, he tore into Obama for getting involved with Syria, and now he's getting involved with Syria.

MAN: They all do that. They're all liars.

MODERATOR: Okay. Let's do this. Go ahead and go to page nine and jot down really quickly what issue you think is most important for President Trump to be successful on. Again, don't care whether you like him or not, but what are the issues that you think it's important for him to be successful on? I'm going to use the little moderator's room. I'll be right back.

All right. Go ahead and close up your workbooks if you're finished. We'll come, we've got one more, and we'll come back to that in a minute . . . at the end. And if you're still

writing, that's fine. Do you trust government more now that Trump is in or less now that Trump is in than you did when Barack Obama was President?

MAN: Less.

WOMAN: Less.

MAN: I distrust the same.

WOMAN: Way less.

MAN: But I never trusted them in the first place, so.

MODERATOR: Okay. Man, how about you?

MAN: I still distrust government . . . that really hasn't changed.

MODERATOR: Okay. Woman, you said a lot less now.

WOMAN: Yeah. Because, I mean, I know that they run it, not really the President, but I just felt like that Obama, he's, I don't know, I just felt like he was more on our side. I think Donald Trump, he's, he can buy anyone, and I think that's what he's doing.

MODERATOR: Okay. Now what I'm going to do is ask about a few controversies that have been in the news and get a show of yes or no on your, you know, raise your hands. I may do a follow-up. I might not. But do you believe that President Obama ordered wiretaps on Donald Trump before the election? How many say yes, a show of hands? Okay. How many say no? Okay. And then, woman and man, you're unsure?

MAN: I don't know . . .

WOMAN: You know, I wouldn't put it past any of them, but I don't know that he did it.

MODERATOR: Okay. Do you believe the Trump campaign team worked with people on the Russian government during the campaign to impact the election? Keep in mind, the question isn't about did the Russian government get involved. That's clear. But did the Trump campaign team work with the Russian government? So how many say, yes, the, or Trump campaign team worked with the Russian government? Three, four. Okay. And how many say no, did not? One, two, three. Man, you're uncertain?

MAN: Yeah. It's hard to disseminate that much information. It's good and bad for . . .

MODERATOR: Okay. Do you think the press purposely lowballed the estimate of the crowd at Trump's inauguration? How many say, yes, the press did that? Okay. One, two. And how many say, no, the press did not? Two, three.

MAN: The press in general or just?

MODERATOR: Well, yeah, most of the press. I mean, obviously, some are more on his side than others, but . . .

MAN: Right. I would say in general.

MODERATOR: Okay. Do you think it is nepotism and wrong for Trump to allow his daughter and son-in-law to have official positions within the U.S. government? How many say, yes, it is? Five or six, seven of you. And then how many of you say, no, it's not wrong? Okay. Man, why doesn't, you know, why are you like, oh, it's fine?

MAN: Well, I mean, I don't think there's anything wrong with having someone who is intelligent that you trust at your side. If it happens to be one of your children or your son-in-law, I don't see the big deal. I mean, you're, most likely, you want someone who is going to support you, so.

MODERATOR: Okay. Woman?

WOMAN: Yeah. This is not an inherited position. I mean, it's not like he's going to say now you are going to be the next President after me, so I don't see any problem with it. You've got a person that you know, that you respect, that you know their loyalty and, also, maybe more importantly, a person that knows you well enough they're not afraid to tell you, hey, you're wrong.

MODERATOR: Okay. How about . . .

WOMAN: Because I think, generally, a President is surrounded by yes men.

MODERATOR: Okay. How about those of you who said, yeah, it's wrong, and it's, or it's nepotism, and it's wrong, what is it that bothers you about it?

MAN: It's not the fact that they're his kids. It's that they own his businesses now and are in charge of those is the problem I have.

MODERATOR: Okay. Other concerns?

WOMAN: I actually kind of think it's the opposite of what woman said, because I'm a daughter, and I have a very strong mother, and I am still afraid of her, and I'm 40 years old. And I still have a hard time saying, no, Mom, you're wrong. I disagree with you. So I feel like,

you know, I don't know their relationship, but in, I would think that's just you're just padding your area with people who are going to tell you what you want to hear.

MAN: Well, he just seems to be very, very doting on his children, and it seems like he almost . . . a little objectively looking at . . .

WOMAN: Whether they do a good job or not.

MAN: Yeah. And he just, oh, good job, honey. Thank you.

MAN: When was the last time in U.S. history that this ever happened?

WOMAN: Right.

MAN: I mean, it's, you're in uncharted territory.

MAN: The Kennedys.

MAN: The Kennedys, they were elected though, but they had a lot of help, but they were elected.

MODERATOR: Well, no.

MAN: He tried to appoint . . .

MODERATOR: He appointed his brother Attorney General, so he's not elected.

MAN: Yeah. That's true.

MODERATOR: So and then the other case that people bring up a lot is, even though she was not appointed to a position, when she was First Lady, early on, Hillary Clinton with the healthcare stuff.

MAN: Yeah. That's another reason I didn't vote for her.

MODERATOR: So there, you know, there have been examples. That doesn't make it right or wrong, but there have been examples in the past.

MAN: But Bill Clinton didn't actually appoint Hillary.

MODERATOR: Right. But she still took over the job of trying to get a healthcare plan. Go ahead and page, go to page 11. I was wrong. There is one more before we get to the last one. And this is five specific issues that Donald Trump spent the most time talking about during the campaign, and you see them listed here. And which, write down, you know, again, the two most important issues to you. You don't have to agree with what he says on the issues, but write down the two most, and then which one is least important to you?

All right. And then just close up the workbooks again. We're actually not going to spend a lot of time talking about that. I'll just look at it later or, not later, sorry, I'll be

sleeping. So go ahead and close up your workbooks now, and then we'll come back right at the end, which we're coming closer to. But let me ask you about a specific issue. It's a couple of specific issues. Obamacare, you know, the Republicans, and, obviously, also Donald Trump have talked about repeal and replacing Obamacare. How come that hasn't happened yet?

MAN: Because they never had an actionable plan. Their . . . of it said no, but they never had a plan to move forward.

MAN: Well, it's an extremely complex healthcare plan.

MAN: They had eight years.

MODERATOR: Okay. Anybody else?

MAN: . . . Trump didn't have eight years but . . .

WOMAN: There's too many people involved, that if they did try to repeal and replace it, then people, there would be too many people who would not get health coverage or would be displaced or wanting in some way. And I think they have to wait until they can figure out how to do it so that those people, those citizens aren't given the shaft.

MAN: I think it goes back to something I said earlier. There's no compromise with the two parties. It's not like the Republicans would say let's fix the pieces that are broken. Instead, they want to throw it all out and completely start over. And I think instead of just throwing out all of it, you find the parts that are a problem, and those are the things you work to fix.

But, unfortunately, I think the two parties can't do anything. They never can agree on anything. They don't, even when one party or the other has control of both houses, they don't get anything done. As a party, if the Democrats have both houses, as they did with Clinton or with Trump having both houses, their own party, they can't get anything done.

So to take an entire, this healthcare system that's been around all these years and say we're just going to scrap it and start all over, it just, it doesn't make any sense. Fix what's wrong. Don't just throw the whole thing out and try to rebuild something from scratch, because it's going to be a nightmare.

MODERATOR: Okay. Any other reasons you think it hasn't happened yet?

WOMAN: I keep going back to the polarization, because, clearly, there are many plans out there that they've got. We've all heard of them. But, and, the Republicans, on their own, should be able to push this through, but they've got their factions within the party that are

polarized on these issues, and some of them just aren't going to budge. If the Republicans can't compromise within themselves, what hope is there for a compromise with Republicans and Democrats?

MAN: It's not also just up to the politicians. You know, they have to talk to the insurance companies and things like that. You know, it takes time and costs a lot of money.

WOMAN: And insurance is a very, very big business, and they have a lot of lobbyists, and they're not going to let them push something through that doesn't make them money. So I think that's going to probably hold it up even more than just Democrat versus Republican.

MODERATOR: Anybody here or their immediate family on, use Obamacare?

MAN: I work in healthcare. I work for hospitals.

MODERATOR: Okay. And, woman, somebody in your family has, is on Obamacare?

WOMAN: My sister and her four kids, yeah, high, high premiums.

MODERATOR: Is that one of the reasons she voted for Trump, or is this a different sister?

WOMAN: Oh, no . . .

MODERATOR: Illegal immigration, do you think that Donald Trump means it when he says that we are going to build a wall along the border with Mexico?

MAN: No.

WOMAN: Does he mean it?

MODERATOR: Yeah. Let me put it differently. Some of his supporters since the election have said, oh, he doesn't mean building an actual wall, it's more strengthening border security. So does he want to just strengthen border security, or does he want to build like a real, physical wall?

MAN: Oh, I think he really wants to build a physical wall. I think it's . . .

WOMAN: Well, I think it's not even going to happen.

[Simultaneous discussion]

MAN: Yeah. I think if the government were going to be successful, they needed to do this 40, 50 years ago, not, I think it's too late.

MAN: It's not going to be like the Great Wall of China, but there's going to be a wall in some places that he is going to like show everybody and be so proud of this little piece of wall.

MAN: I mean, there are already a lot of walls that are on the border. He'd only be extending them.

WOMAN: So, yeah, I think he means physically an actual wall that you can take a picture of.

MODERATOR: Okay. I heard somebody over there start to say something. Woman, was that you?

WOMAN: No, it wasn't me.

WOMAN: Well, I lived in Arizona for 30 years of my life . . . that unless you have a wall, you're not going to stop it. I mean, you can climb a fence. And you can sit there on the Arizona side in Nogales and just watch them coming through holes in the fences. There's trails, and, you know, 15 or 20 every hour. And on the other side of the border, agents are trying to pick them up. It's, there's no easy way to plug that. They're going to have to build a wall.

MAN: Well, for that matter, the wall wouldn't do any good anyway, because the cartels that smuggle drugs, they use the same tunnels to smuggle people. So, I mean, you can build a wall that's 150 feet high. What good would it do?

MAN: You can build into the ground too.

MAN: Also they have things called ladders.

WOMAN: Yes . . .

MAN: All right. They could bring them by boat them.

WOMAN: It'll slow them down. That's all you can do.

MODERATOR: Midterm elections, they're not, obviously, it's when the President is not up, but you have, in Texas you have the governor is up, and Congress, of course, is up. Some senators are up. I think I read that Ted Cruz is up.

MAN: He is.

MODERATOR: Yeah. He's up. I don't know who your other senator is. He's obviously not up.

WOMAN: John Cornyn.



MODERATOR: Oh, Cornyn. That's right. He's obviously not up. I've heard that name. But these midterm elections, anybody here planning to definitely vote in the 2018 November election? One, two, three, four, five. Okay. Do you guys consider it, is this an election where you're going to vote Republican to either reinforce Trump or focus on Republicans in Congress, or vote for the Democrats to be a check and balance on Trump?

WOMAN: Democrat.

MAN: Too early for me to say what mine is.

[Simultaneous discussion]

MODERATOR: Okay. Man, why are you, you're already?

MAN: Because the . . . bills, laws shouldn't be passed so quickly, and having one party on both sides can get them done very fast if they wanted to get them done very fast, and so I think it would be a good check and balance.

MODERATOR: Okay. And, woman, you said you're going to vote Democratic. Okay. And why is that?

WOMAN: So that Democrats have more of a voice. I don't feel like they do right now.

MODERATOR: Okay. Finish this sentence for me. I've got two sentences. I'll tell them both to you, and I'd like to hear answers on both. To me, again, whether you like him or not, to me, Donald Trump's presidency will be a success if? And then finish that sentence. And then the next question that I'll ask in a little bit is I will be disappointed in him if Donald Trump doesn't deliver on?

No, that's not what my next question should be. Oh, I don't know what that other one is. Kyle, what was the question? Text me the question that I asked in the last group, the second one, 52. That's the one I want to ask here. Okay. So finish this sentence for me. Oh, no, text it to me. I kind of remember it. To me, Donald Trump's presidency will be a success if?

MAN: . . .

MODERATOR: Pardon?

MAN: Are you saying . . .

MAN: The economy really fixed up.

MODERATOR: Okay. The economy really, in other words, if, you know, if in sometime over the next four years, if this thing . . .

MAN: . . . I wasn't sure if we were saying it now or waiting for the . . .

MODERATOR: Oh, okay. And now I've got my answer. Okay. To me, Donald Trump's presidency will be a success if?

MAN: He plans things out more.

WOMAN: He cleans up, cleans Washington up.

MODERATOR: Cleans Washington up.

WOMAN: He gets a really good publicist who stops him from saying things . . .

[Simultaneous discussion]

MODERATOR: To me, Donald Trump's presidency will be a success if?

WOMAN: He's able to actually make some changes in policy . . . work things up there.

MODERATOR: Okay. To me . . .

WOMAN: . . . reform particularly.

MODERATOR: I'm sorry, what reform?

WOMAN: Tax reform particularly.

MODERATOR: Oh, tax reform. I'm sorry. And I'll ask it one more time. To me, Donald Trump's presidency will be a success if?

WOMAN: Okay. I'll answer seriously. If he really does move the economy, pay down the deficit, like money, if he can be really, really good with money for the next 4 years and put us in a better place than we were even 12 years ago, I think that we could say that his presidency was a success.

MODERATOR: Okay. To me, the biggest, finish this sentence, to me, the biggest worry I have over the next three years about Donald Trump is?

MAN: And it's just that he's that quick trigger finger, not just with like actual airstrikes, just with coming up with well thought out, actual plans, not just getting rid of stuff or doing stuff without actually thinking about consequences or how his actions are going to play out.

MODERATOR: To me, the biggest worry over the next three years about Donald Trump is?

MAN: He focuses on helping big business and not, you know, the American middle class.

MAN: Hidden agenda.

MODERATOR: Hidden agenda. Okay. To me, the biggest worry over the next three years about Donald Trump and his impact on the country is?

WOMAN: Going off on his own and doing things that aren't good for the country because he wants to. The executive orders, or, you know, not involving Congress, not playing by the rules.

MODERATOR: Okay. To me, the biggest worry I have over the next three years for the country because of Donald Trump is?

MAN: Irreparable social rifts.

MODERATOR: Okay. For me, the biggest worry I have over the next three years for the country because of Donald Trump is? Okay. Please turn to page 11 in your workbook, which is, no, it's 13, I'm sorry, 13 in your workbook, which happens to be the last page. And here's your chance to send a message. Here you're all writing a postcard to President Trump, either with some advice for the President or asking him to work on a certain issue.

Take another minute or so if you're still writing. All right. Everybody, if you can go ahead and close up your workbooks and just pass them forward to get them out of your way. I've got one last question for you. So we are going to get out of here a little bit early, not a lot but a little. Just 12 nights ago, the U.S., under Trump's direction, sent a bunch of Tomahawk missiles into Syria to an airfield where they had launched planes that dropped chemical weapons on their own people in Syria, on the rebels in Syria.

But it was civilians, not, I mean, not that it would have been fine if it was the military, but it was civilians, which is considered, you know, even more heinous. Do you approve, or I want to see just a show of hands, how many approve of using the Tomahawk missiles, and then how many disapprove? How many approve? One, two, three, four. How many disapprove? One, two, three, four, five. Woman, you're undecided.

WOMAN: . . . that I would, you know, I watched *West Wing* all those years ago, and I know that what you see on the surface isn't actually what's going on behind the scenes. And I also know that the decisions that get to that office are not the easy decisions, because someone else has already taken care of those. So I don't think it was done lightly. I don't know that it was a good idea. I don't like that lives were lost, but maybe it had to be done.

MODERATOR: And then somebody who approved, why are you supportive of that?

MAN: Using chemical weapons is against international law, as is, you know, killing civilians, so, you know, I mean, it was just enforcing international law. We're the only country that can do it.

MODERATOR: Okay. Somebody who disapproved?

MAN: It was just a way to punish them, and they still were able to send out aircraft from that airfield, so they didn't do a great job of punishing a lot of their, if they were going to just try to shut down that airfield because they sent out chemical weapons, make sure you actually do what you wanted to do, to actually shut down the airfield.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thanks for your time tonight. The nice folks who checked you in will have your payment on the way out. And my last request is that you drive home safely. Have a good night.

MAN: Thank you.

WOMAN: Thank you.